

A Centaur's Life

9



story & art
KEI MURAYAMA

A Centaur's Life

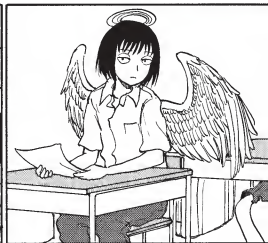
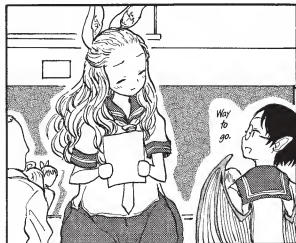
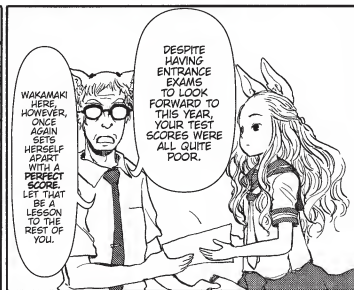
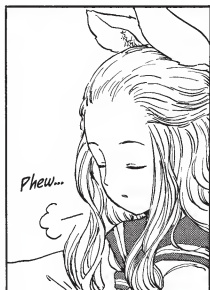
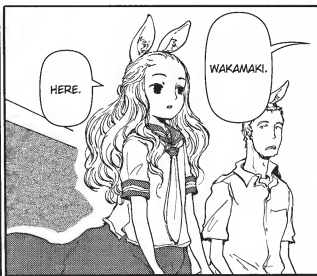
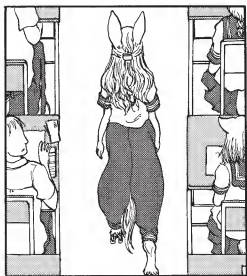
9



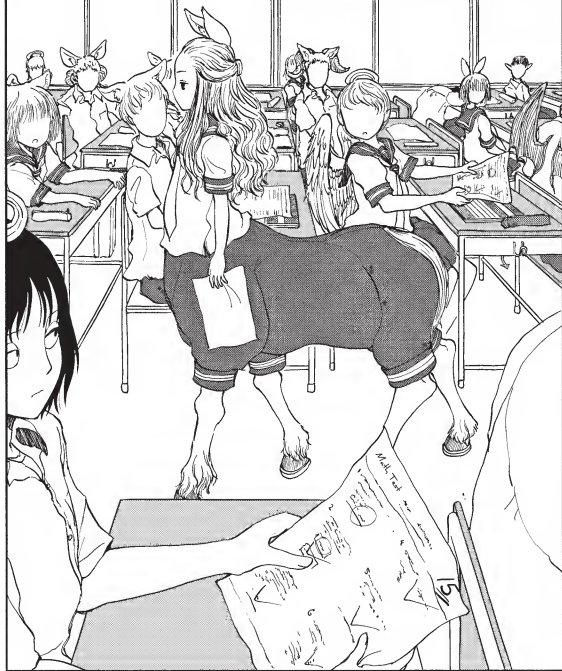
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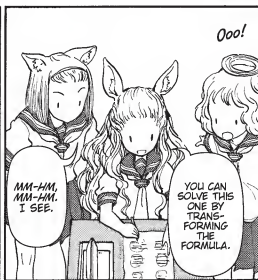
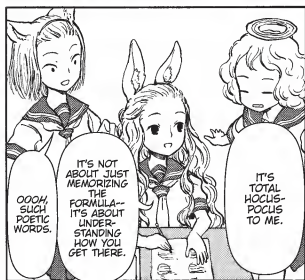
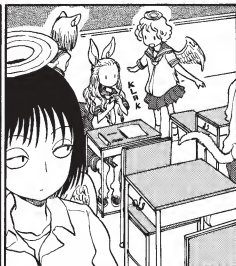
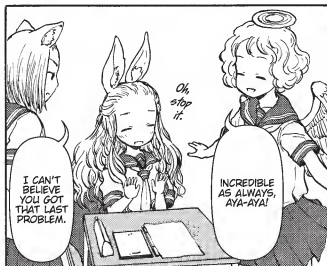
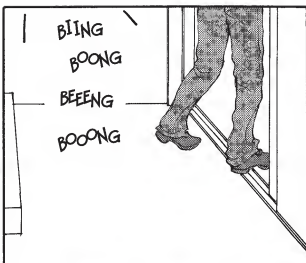
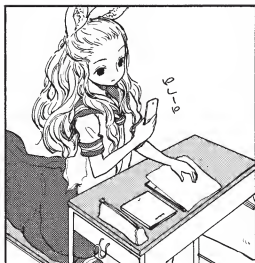
**KEI
MURAYAMA**

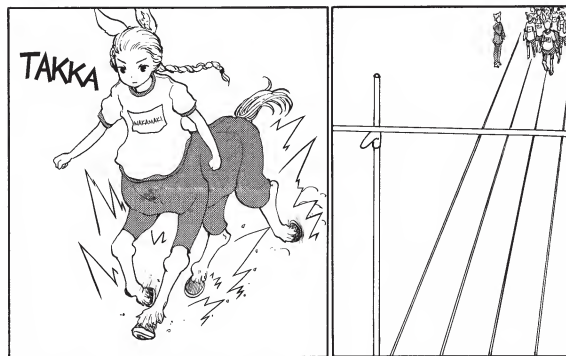
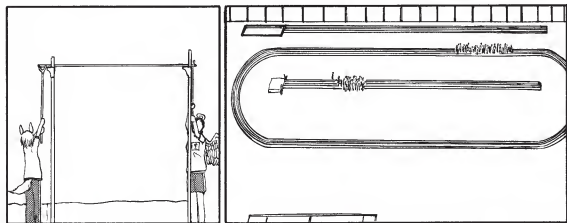
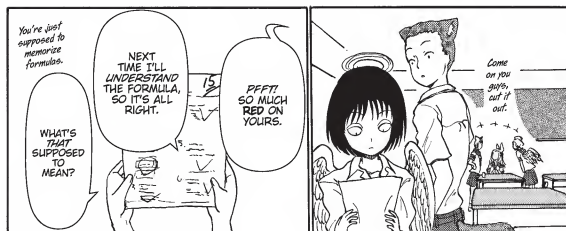


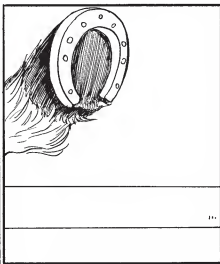
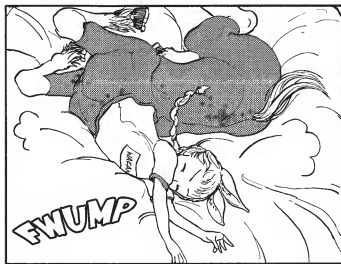
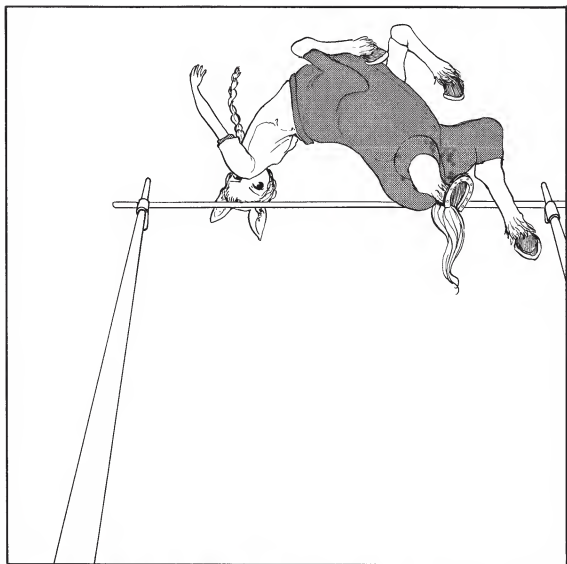


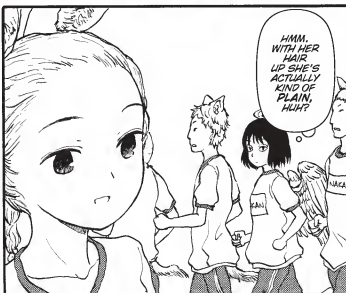
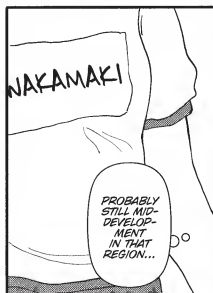
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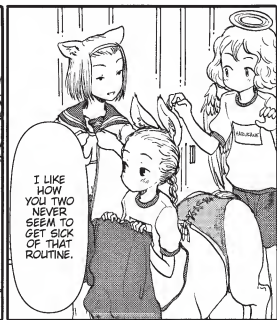
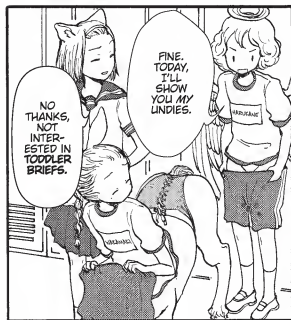
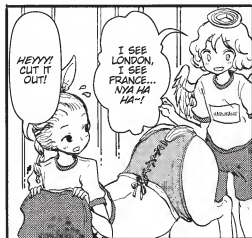


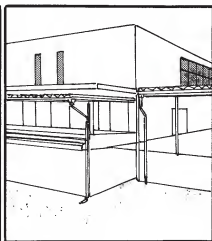
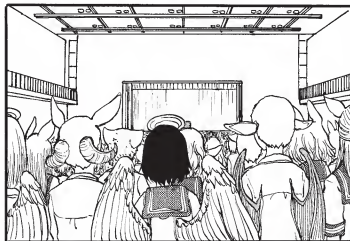
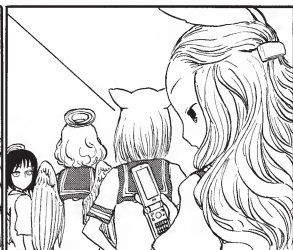
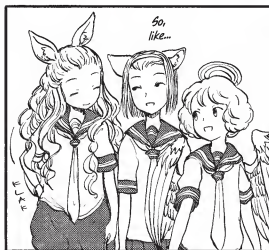
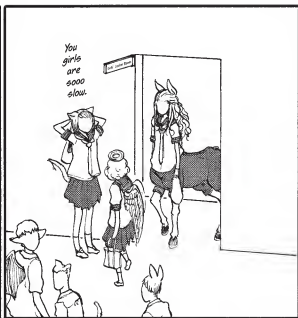
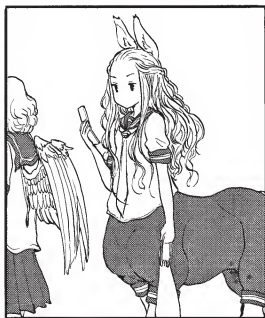


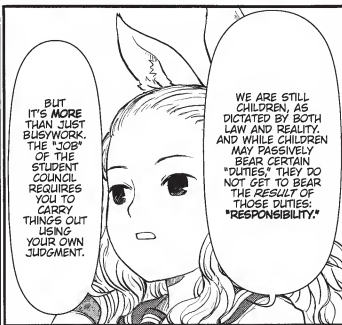


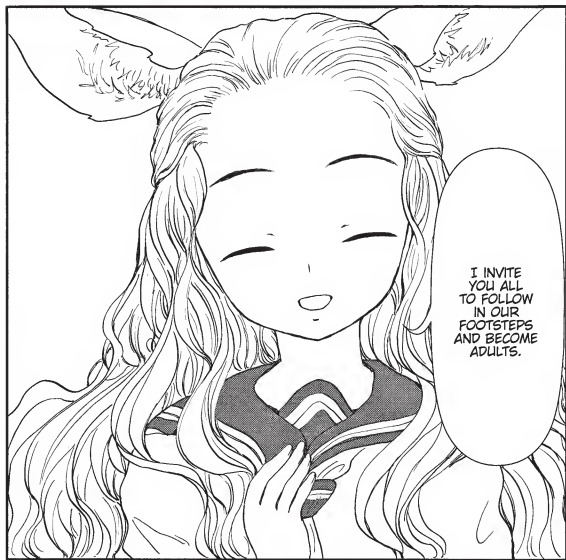
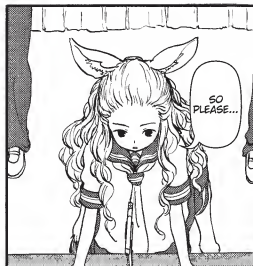


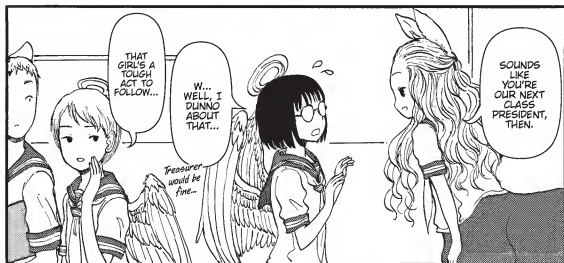
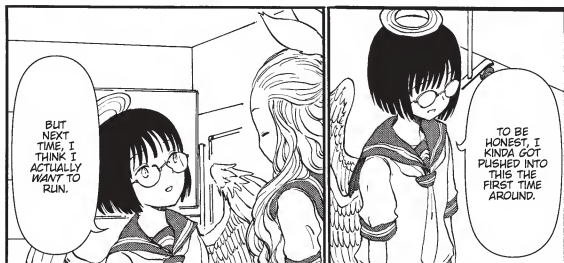
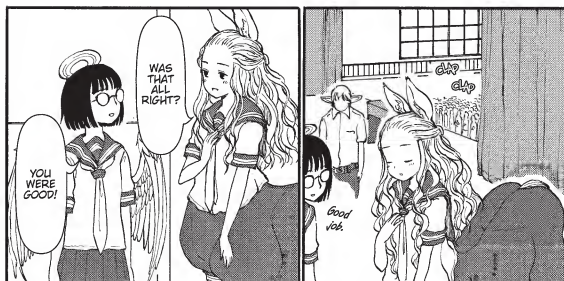


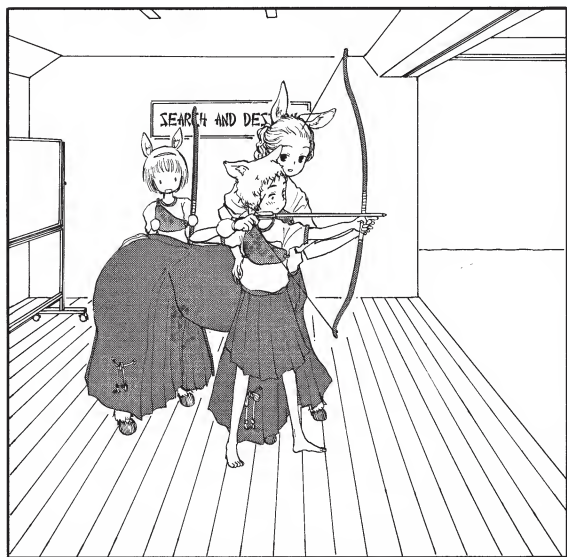
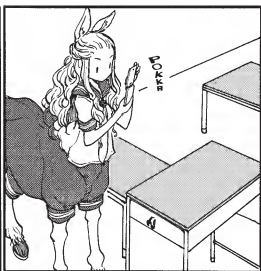
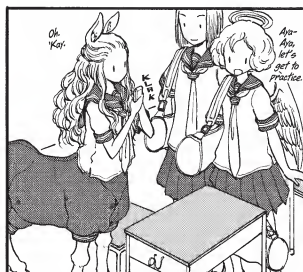


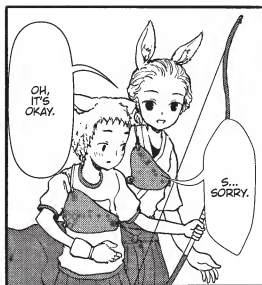












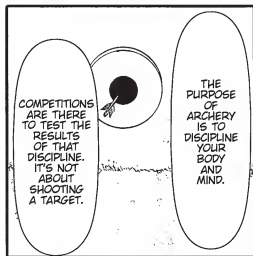
OH,
IT'S
OKAY.

S...
SORRY.



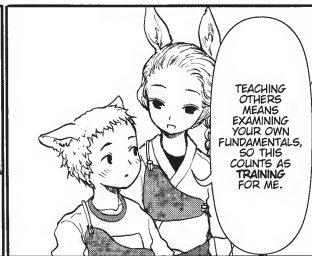
HEY,
FRESHY!
QUIT
MAKING
YOUR
SEMPAIS
BABYSIT!

*Finale are
just around
the corner!*

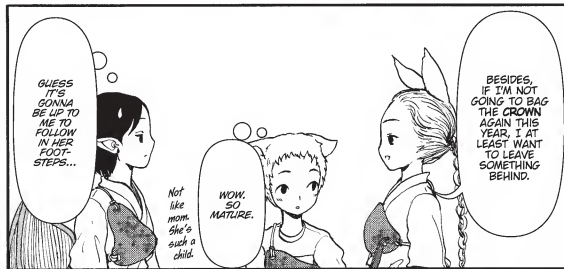


COMPETITIONS
ARE THERE
TO TEST THE
RESULTS OF
THAT
DISCIPLINE.
IT'S NOT
ABOUT
SHOOTING
A TARGET.

THE
PURPOSE
OF
ARCHERY
IS TO
DISCIPLINE
YOUR
BODY
AND
MIND.



TEACHING
OTHERS
MEANS
EXAMINING
YOUR OWN
FUNDAMENTALS,
SO THIS
COUNTS AS
TRAINING
FOR ME.

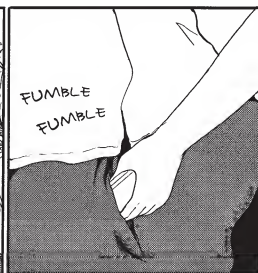
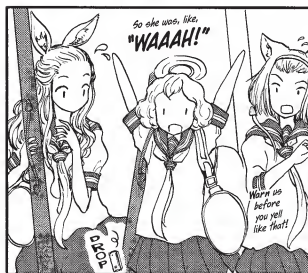
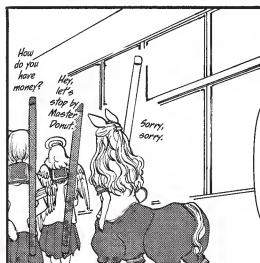
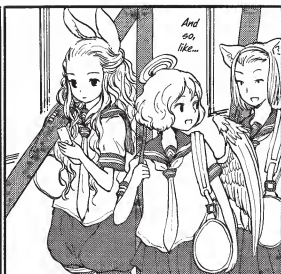
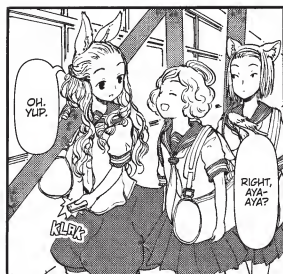


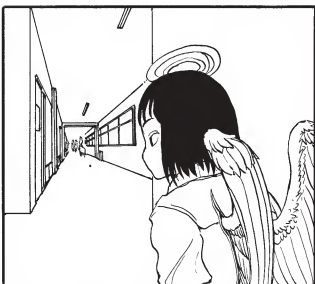
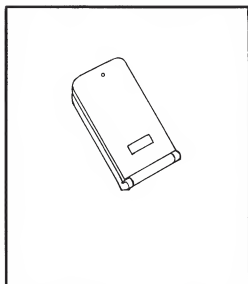
GUESS
IT'S
GONNA
BE UP TO
ME TO
FOLLOW
IN HER
FOOT-
STEPS...

*Not
like
mom.
She's
such a
child.*

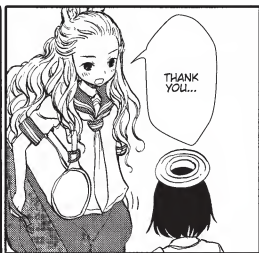
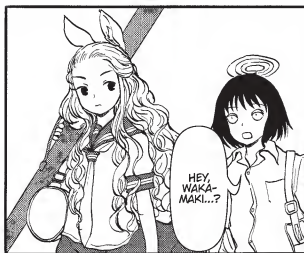
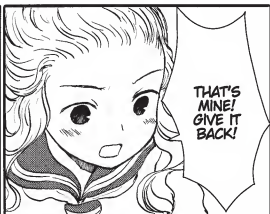
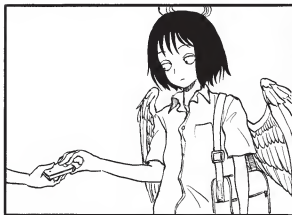
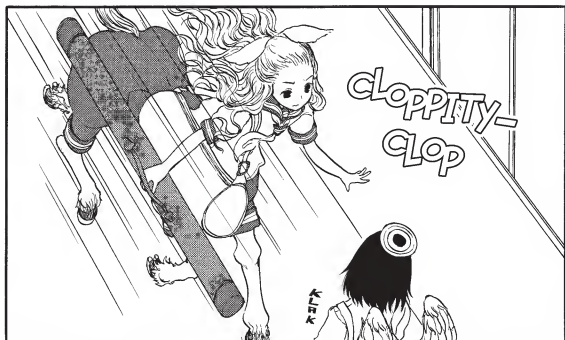
WOW.
SO
MATURE.

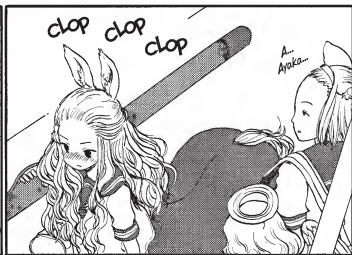
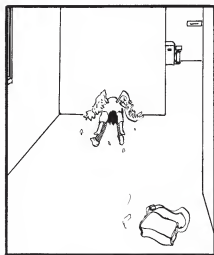
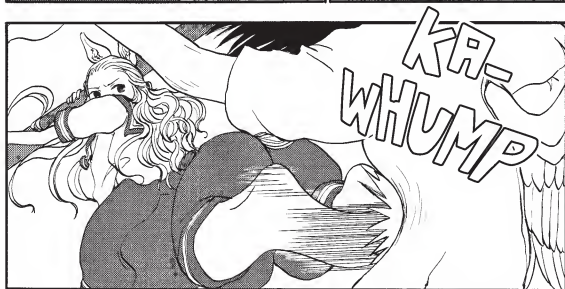
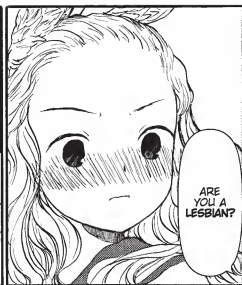
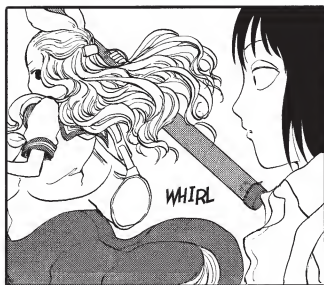
BESIDES,
IF I'M NOT
GOING TO BAG
THE CROWN
AGAIN THIS
YEAR, I AT
LEAST WANT
TO LEAVE
SOMETHING
BEHIND.

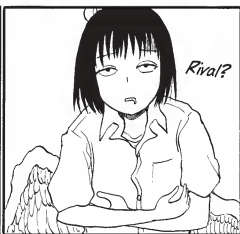
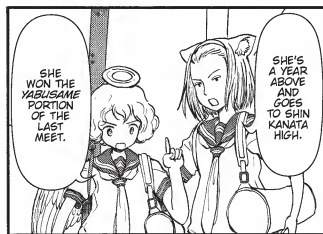
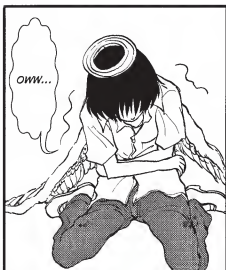
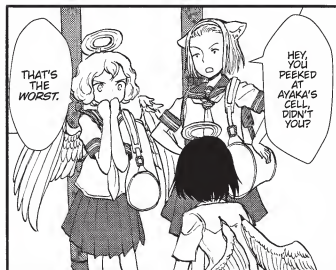






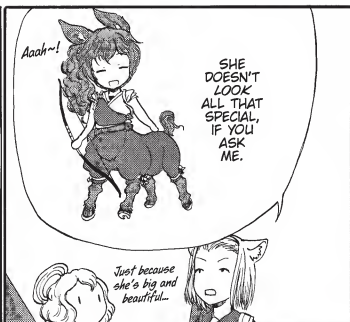








BUT
WITHOUT
A RIVAL,
AYAKA
WOULD
NEVER
GET BY.



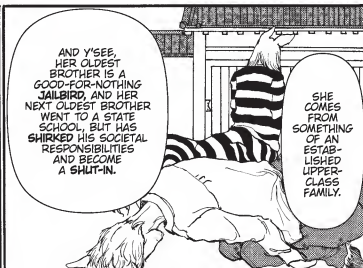
Aaah~!

SHE
DOESN'T
LOOK
ALL THAT
SPECIAL,
IF YOU
ASK
ME.

Just because
she's big and
beautiful...

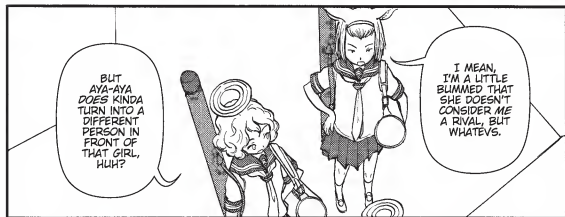


YOU
MUST
SUPPORT
THIS
HOUSE
OF
WAKA-
MAKI.



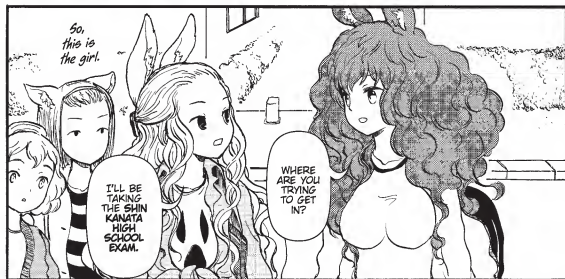
AND Y'SEE,
HER OLDEST
BROTHER IS A
GOOD-FOR-NOTHING
JAILBIRD, AND HER
NEXT OLDEST BROTHER
WENT TO A STATE
SCHOOL, BUT HAS
SHIRKED HIS SOCIETAL
RESPONSIBILITIES
AND BECOME
A SHUT-IN.

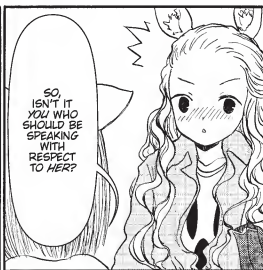
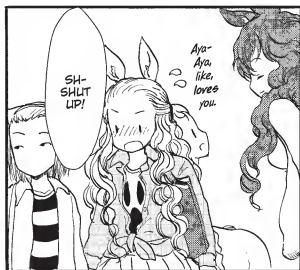
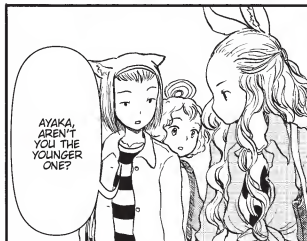
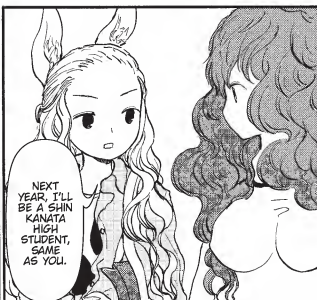
SHE
COMES
FROM
SOMETHING
OF AN ESTAB-
LISHED UPPER-
CLASS FAMILY.

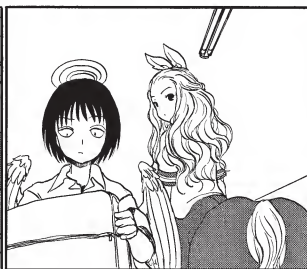
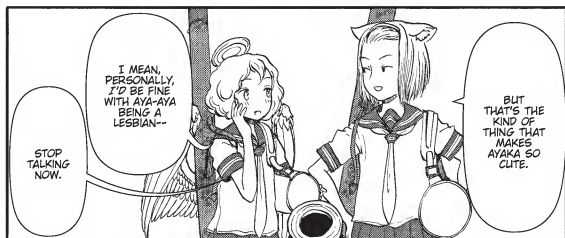


BUT
AYA-AYA
DOES KINDA
TURN INTO A
DIFFERENT
PERSON IN
FRONT OF
THAT GIRL,
HUH?

I MEAN,
I'M A LITTLE
BUMMED THAT
SHE DOESN'T
CONSIDER ME
A RIVAL, BUT
WHATEVS.





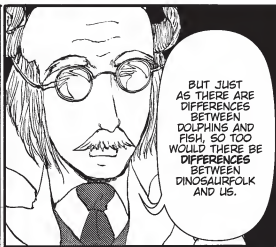
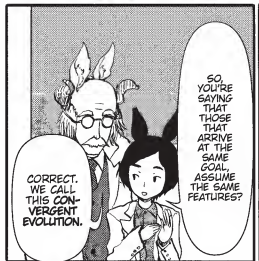
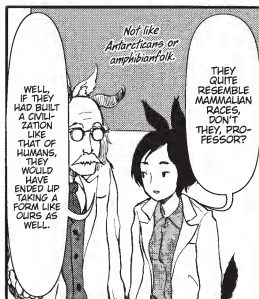


A CentaUr's Life

HEROES OF THE FANTASY WORLD: HENSHIN MASK

THE ORIGINAL FANTASY HERO SERIES FOR CHILDREN, *HENSHIN MASK* WAS PRODUCED WITH AN UNTHINKABLY SMALL BUDGET BY MODERN STANDARDS. THE CENTRAL PREMISE INVOLVED A HERO WHO COULD TRANSFORM INTO OTHER PEOPLE, RACE AND ALL--A PREMISE BORN OUT OF THE STUDIO'S INABILITY TO SECURE A STEADY CAST, AS WELL AS SOME IDEAS BORROWED FROM A CERTAIN POPULAR DETECTIVE SERIES. IN EFFECT, THIS MEANT THAT THE SHOW HAD DIFFERENT ACTORS (OR, AT TIMES, AMATEUR FRIENDS OR FAMILY MEMBERS OF THE CREW) PORTRAYING THE HERO UNDER THE GUISE OF "TRANSFORMATION". THIS LED TO OVERWHELMING POPULARITY AMONGST CHILDREN, BUT ALSO HAD AN UNFORESEEN IMPACT WHICH WOULD LAST FOR GENERATIONS TO COME. IT BROUGHT FORTH THE NOTION THAT A HERO MUST TRANSCEND RACE.



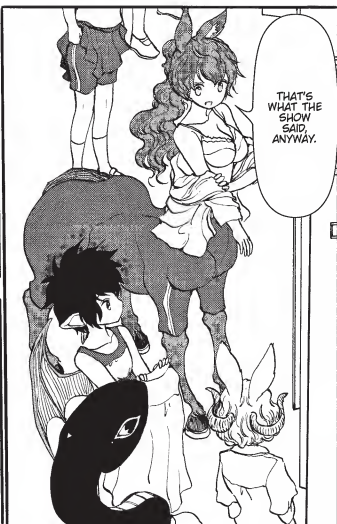


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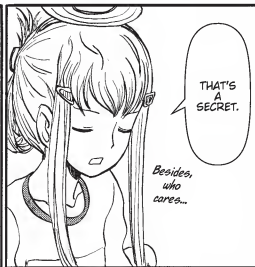
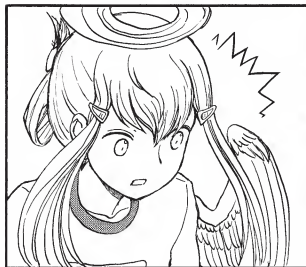
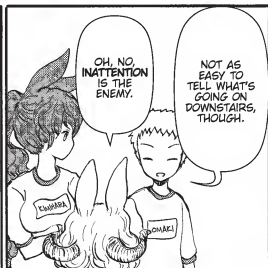
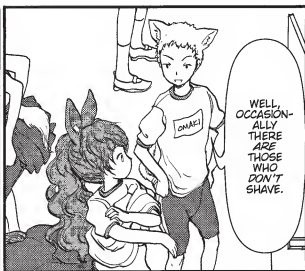


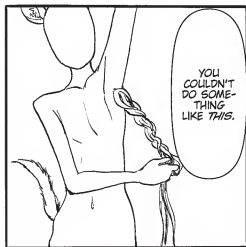
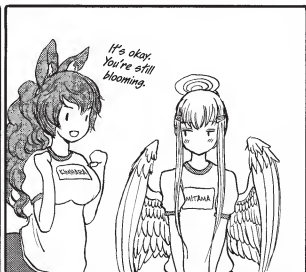
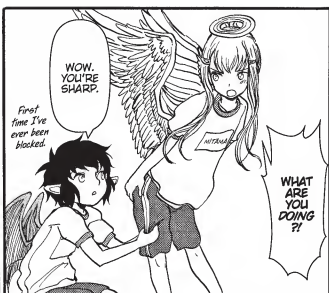
...IT'S
POSSIBLE
THAT THEY
WOULD HAVE
HAD FEATHERS
SPROUTING
FROM THEIR
UNDERARMS.

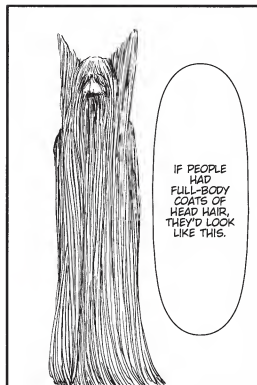


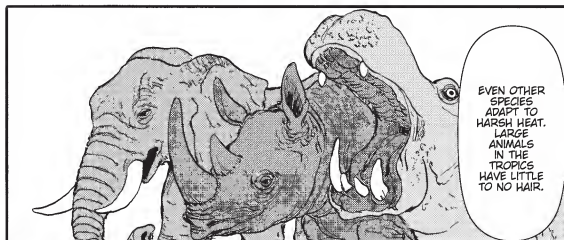
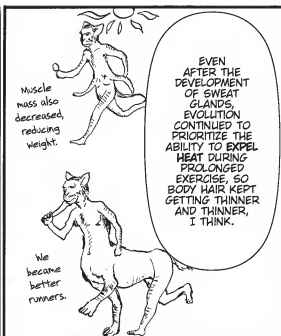
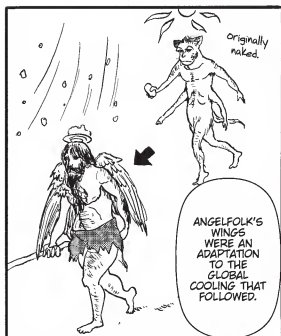


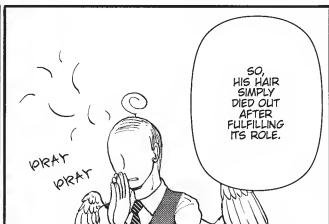
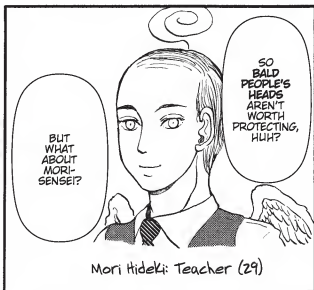
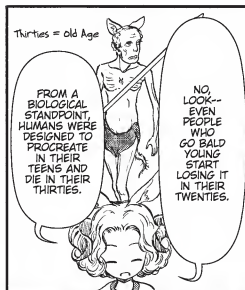














I MEAN,
LIONS HAVE
THOSE THICK
MANES THAT
CAN STOP
FANGS FROM
SINKING INTO
THEIR NECKS.
NOW, THAT'S
PROTECTION,
BLT--

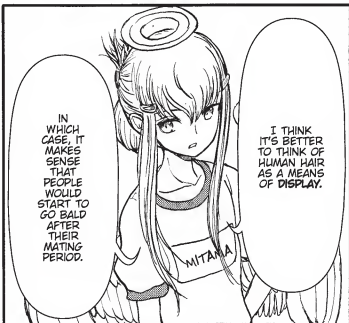


...WHAT
KIND OF
PROTECTION
CAN HAIR
PROVIDE,
ANYWAY?

Ack!

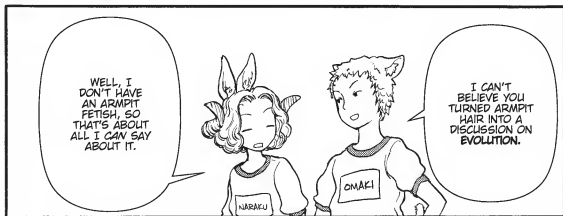


IT
ALSO
EXPLAINS
WHY WE
STYLE
OUR
HAIR.



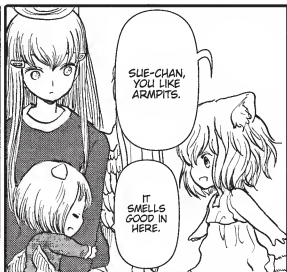
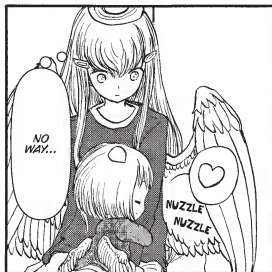
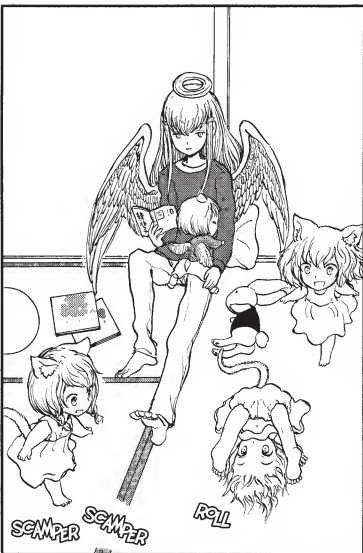
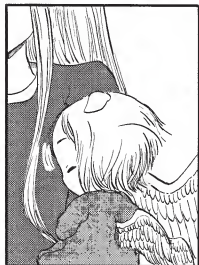
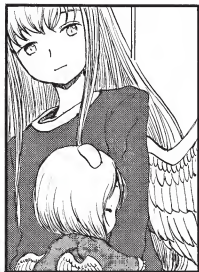
IN
WHICH
CASE, IT
MAKES
SENSE
THAT
PEOPLE
WOULD
START TO
GO BALD
AFTER
THEIR
MATING
PERIOD.

I THINK
IT'S BETTER
TO THINK OF
HUMAN HAIR
AS A MEANS
OF DISPLAY.



WELL, I
DON'T HAVE
AN ARMPIT
FETISH, SO
THAT'S ABOUT
ALL I CAN SAY
ABOUT IT.

I CAN'T
BELIEVE YOU
TURNED ARMPIT
HAIR INTO A
DISCUSSION ON
EVOLUTION.

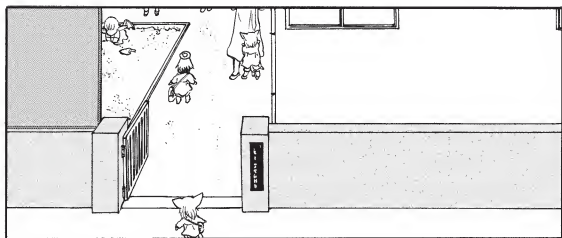


A CentaUr's Life

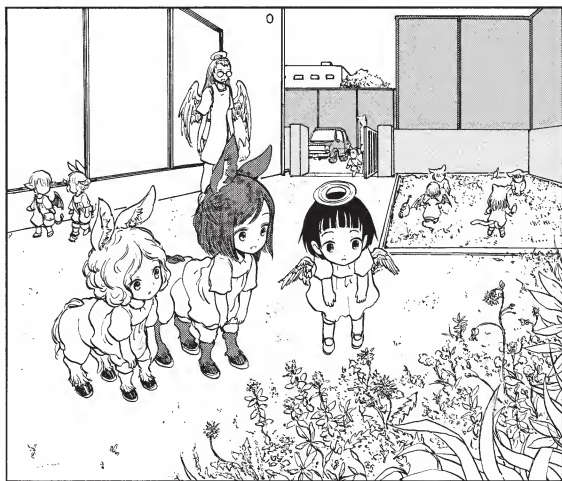
HEROES OF THE FANTASY WORLD: HOLY BIRD OF PREY DOFALCON

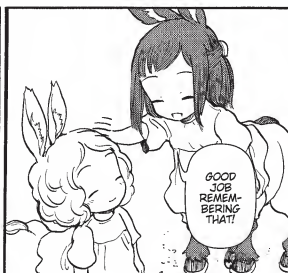
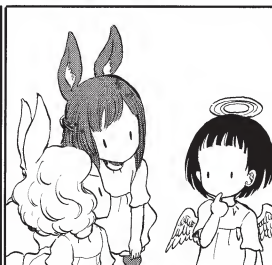
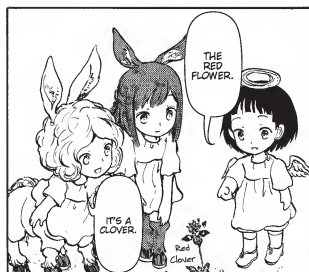
A TV ACTION HERO SERIES FROM THE CREATOR OF HENSHIN MASK. RELATIVE TO ITS PREDECESSOR, THE SERIES BUDGET SEEMED A SMALL FORTUNE (OF COURSE, IT WAS STILL A WAYS OFF FROM AN ACTUAL FORTUNE), BUT CONTROVERSY DEVELOPED AROUND THE FIXED RACE OF THE PROTAGONIST AND ANTAGONIST--THE FORMER CLEARLY AN ANGELFOLK, THE LATTER CLEARLY A CENTAUR (ALBEIT MOSTLY HIDDEN UNDER A CLOAK). THIS RAISED ALLEGATIONS OF RACIAL DISCRIMINATION, TO WHICH THE NETWORK RESPONDED THAT THE PROTAGONIST WAS NOT AN ANGELFOLK, BUT A PERSONIFIED BIRD. THEY ALSO CHANGED THE LOOK OF THE VILLAIN TO MAKE HIS RACE MORE AMBIGUOUS. WHILE THE SHOW CONTINUED TO RECEIVE CRITICISM FROM SOME MEMBERS OF THE CULTURAL ELITE, IT MANAGED TO AVOID ANY LEGAL REPERCUSSIONS AND WAS ABLE TO SEE OUT ITS PLANNED NUMBER OF EPISODES, BUT THE STRINGS ATTACHED HAD BECOME CLEAR TO SEE.

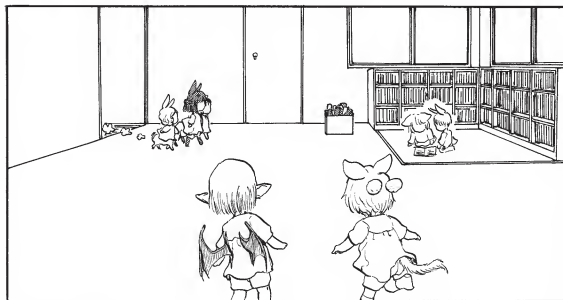
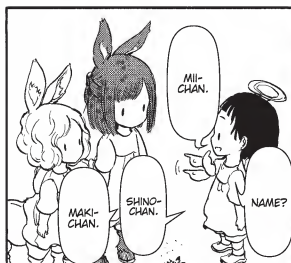


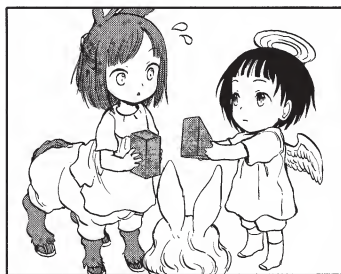
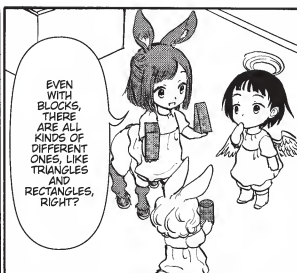
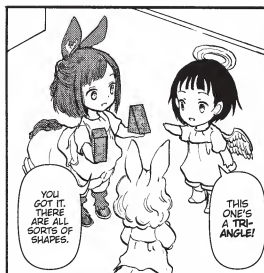


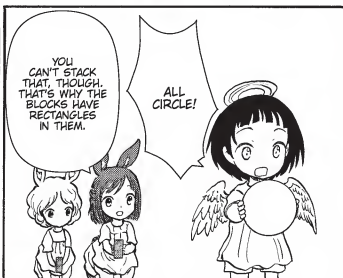
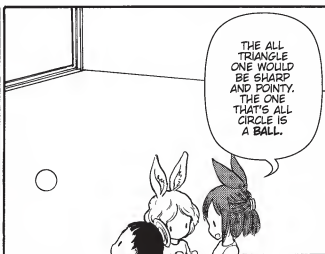
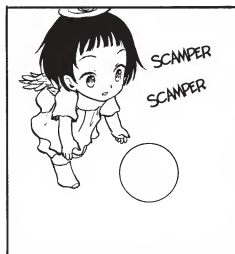
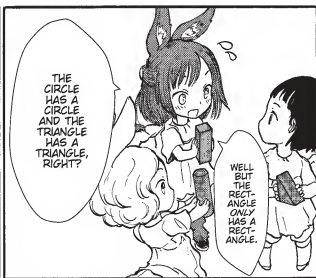
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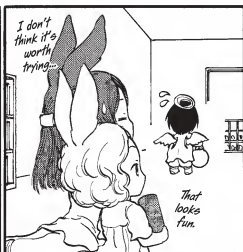
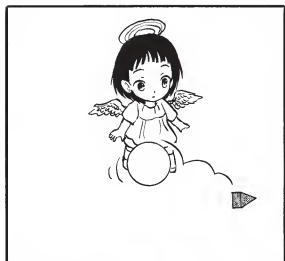


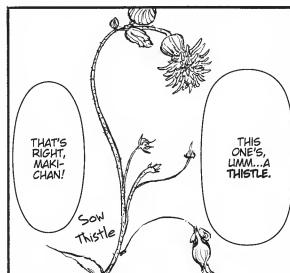
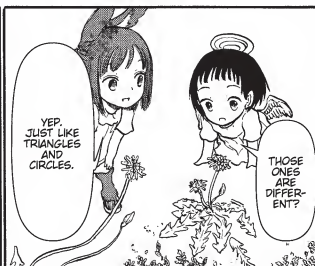
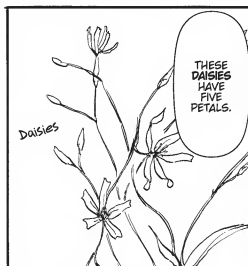
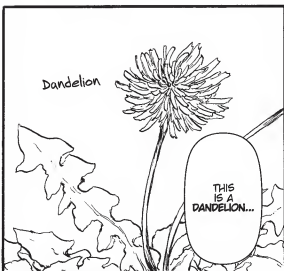


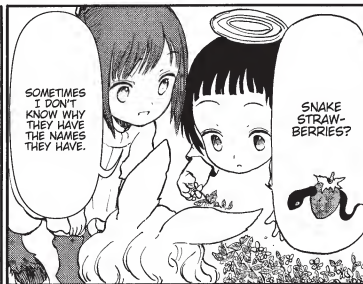
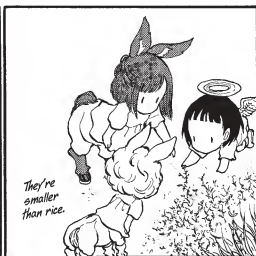
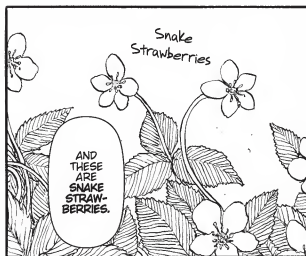
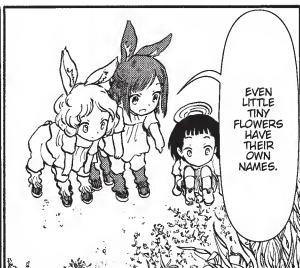
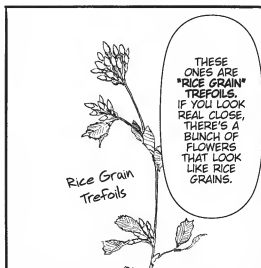


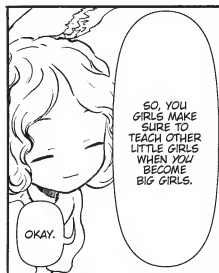
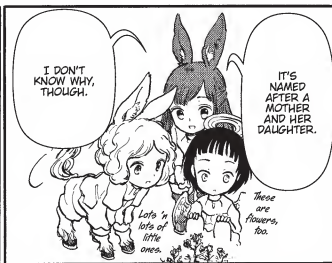
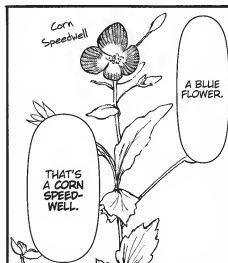
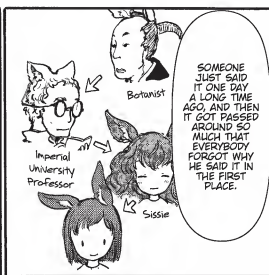
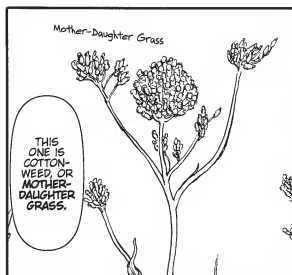


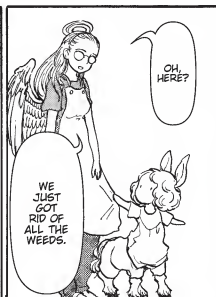
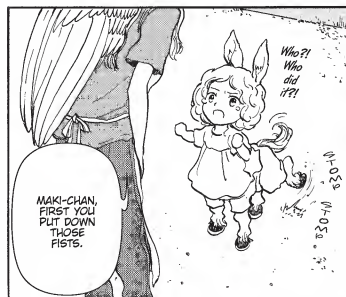
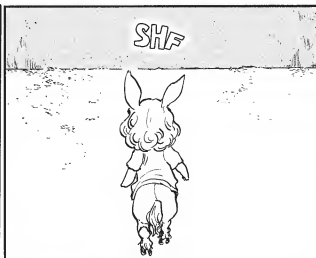
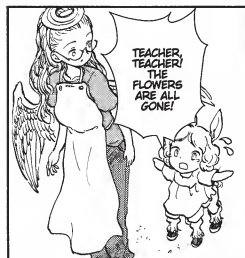
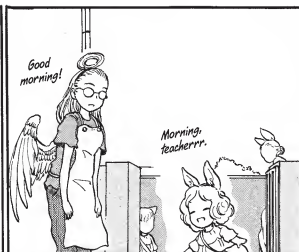
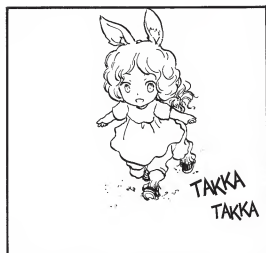


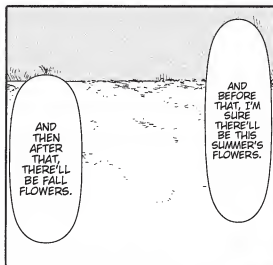
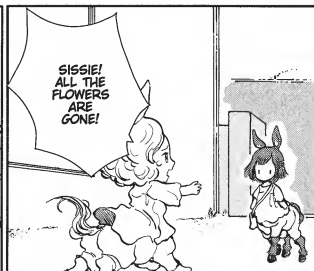
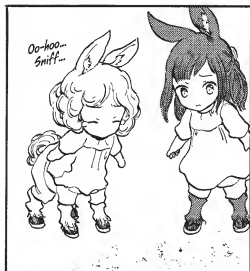


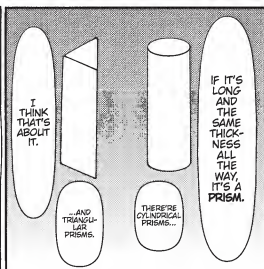
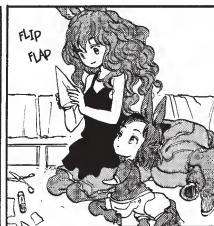
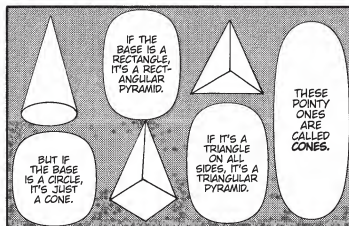
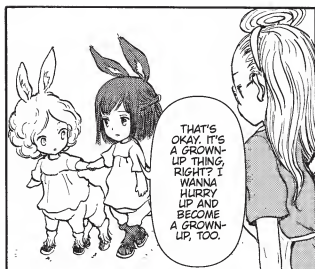










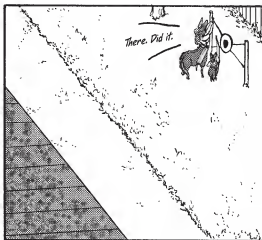


A CentaUr's Life

HEROES OF THE FANTASY WORLD: EL TIGRE'S ROAR

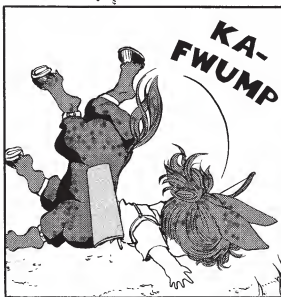
A COMBINATION PERIOD PIECE AND ACTION HERO ROMP. NOT ONLY THE PROTAGONIST, BUT THE ENTIRE CAST OF CHARACTERS DONNED ANIMAL MASKS AND PORTRAYED ANIMALS, ALLOWING THE FILM TO AVOID PINNING ANY ONE RACE AS GOOD OR EVIL. AS A DRAMA, THE FILM REMAINED FAITHFUL TO THE ACTION HERO GENRE WHILE STILL MANAGING TO AVOID SIMPLE, ONE-DIMENSIONAL VILLAINS, AND THE FILM'S LIKABLE CAST OF CHARACTERS EARNED IT A POSITIVE RECEPTION. HOWEVER, THE USE OF MASKS EVEN FOR BACKGROUND EXTRAS TOOK A SIGNIFICANT TOLL ON THE CREATOR'S ALREADY STRAINED FINANCIAL SITUATION. THE POSITIVE RECEPTION ALSO PROVED TO BE A HALF-HEARTED ONE, CREATING PRESSURE FOR A SEQUEL (PRODUCTION OF A SEQUEL WAS ALSO REQUIRED IN ORDER TO OBTAIN THE FILM'S OPERATING INCOME FROM THE BANK), WHICH WOULD ULTIMATELY PROVE TRAGIC.

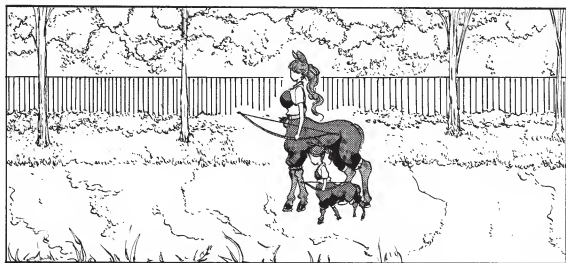
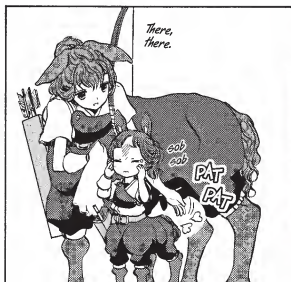


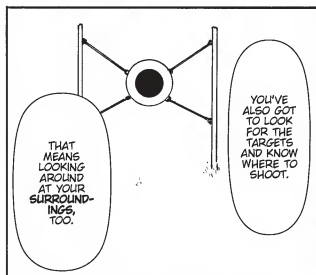
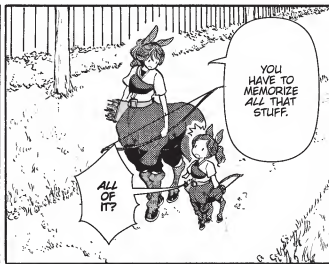
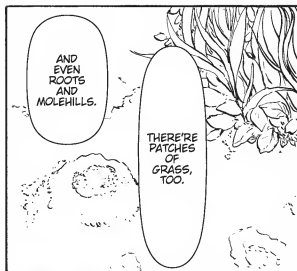


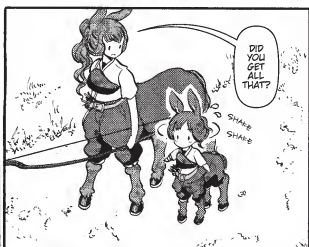
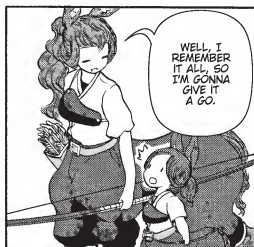
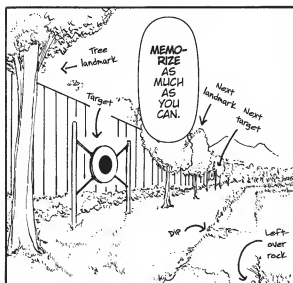
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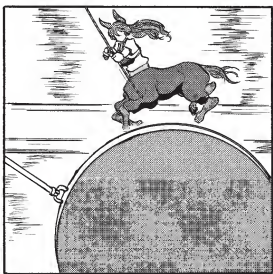
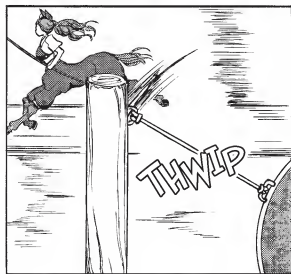
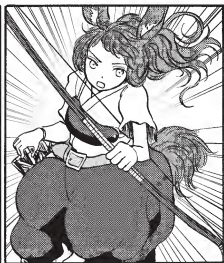
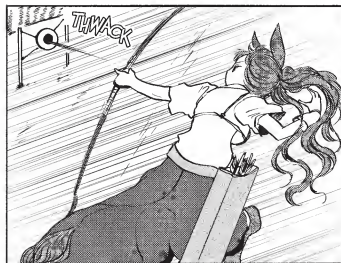
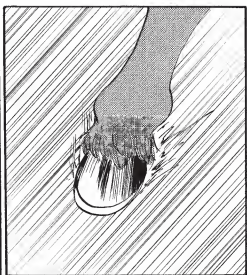
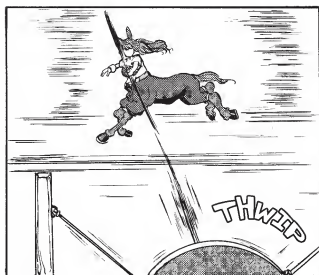
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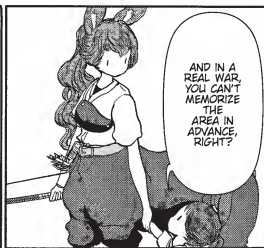
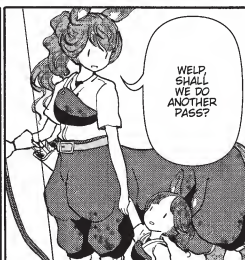
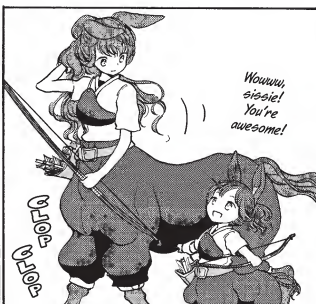


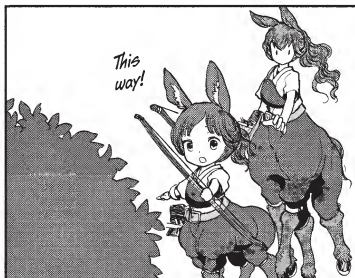
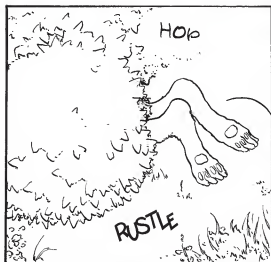
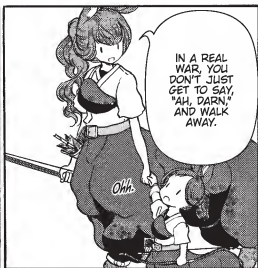


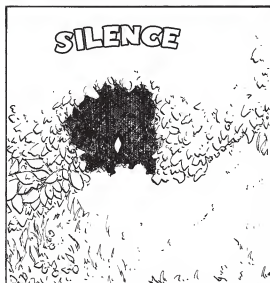
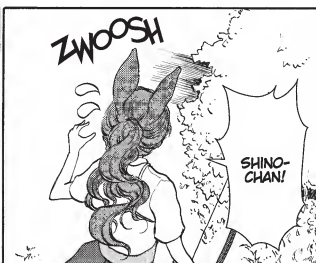


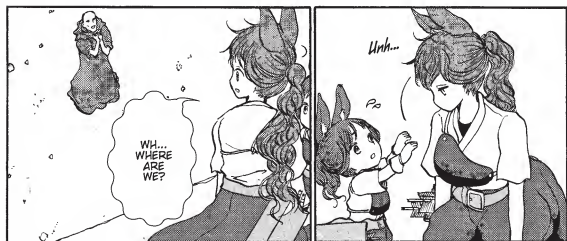
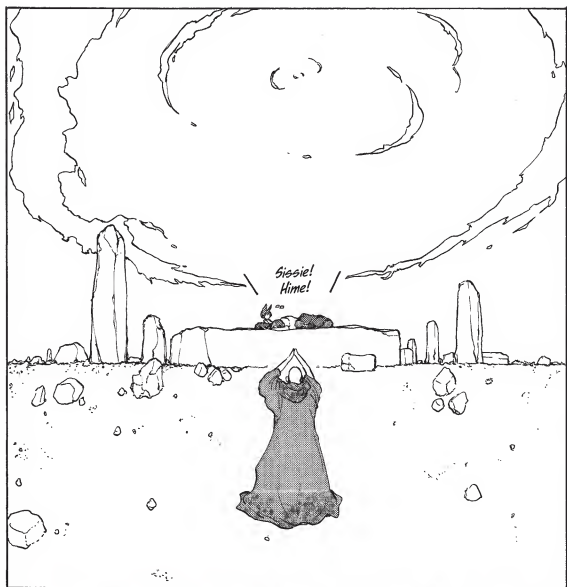


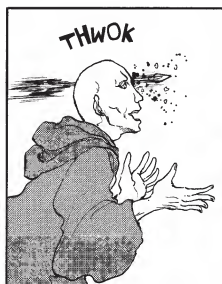


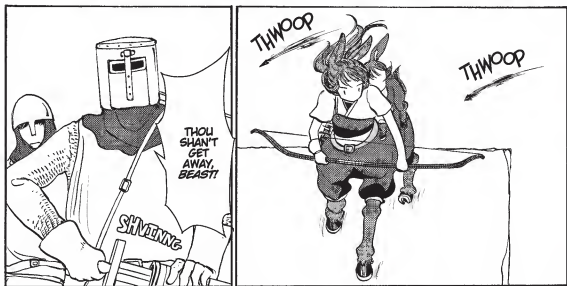
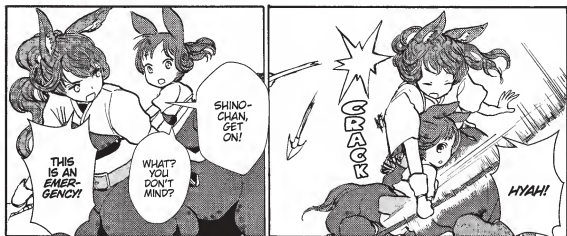


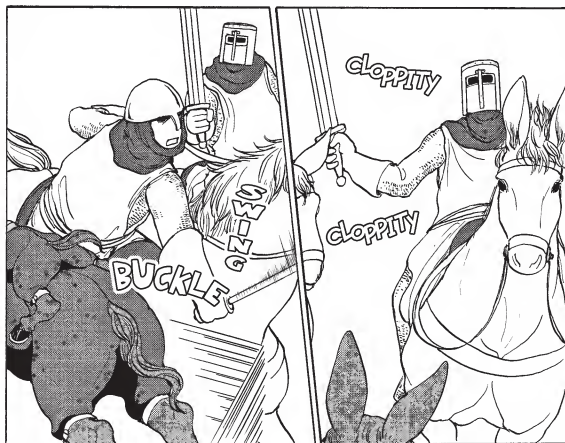
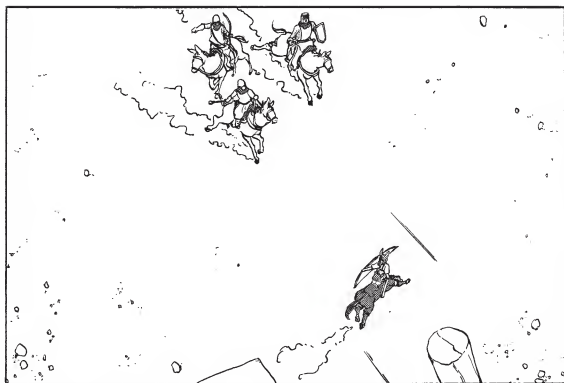


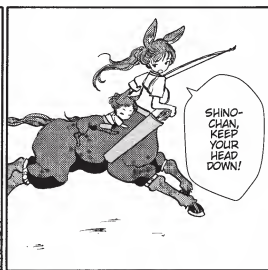
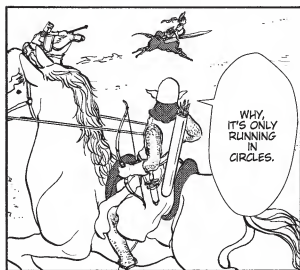
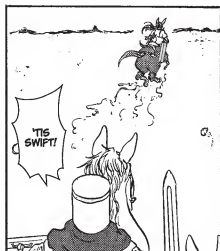
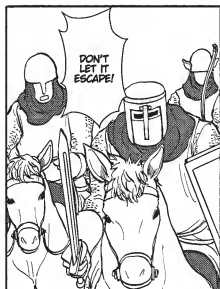


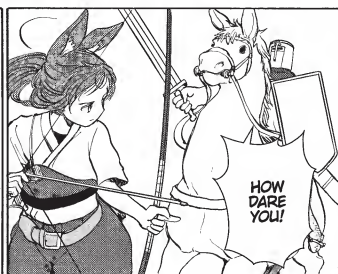
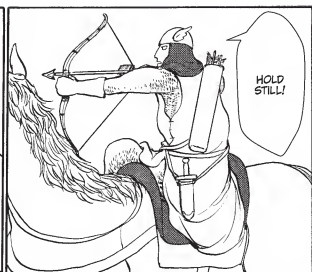
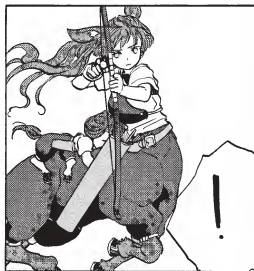


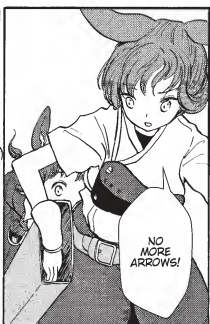
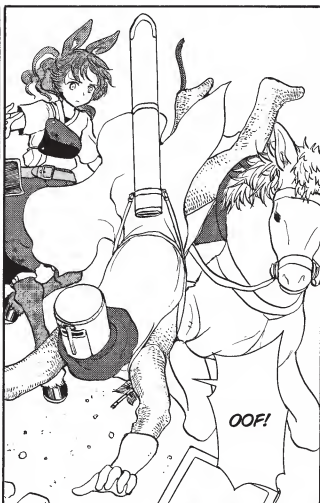
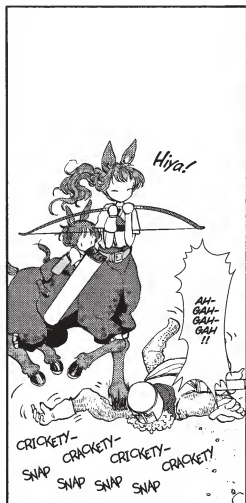


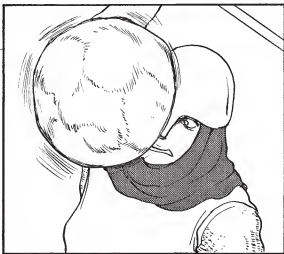
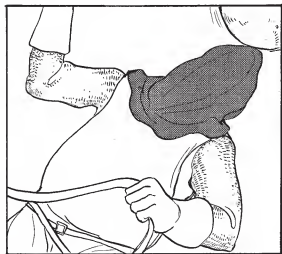
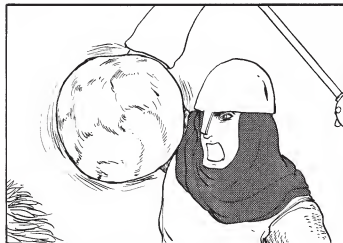
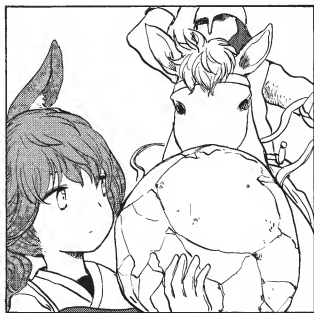


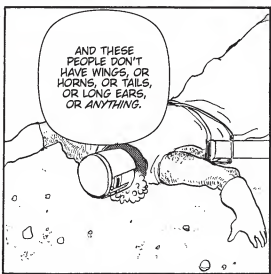
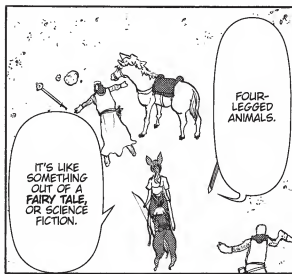
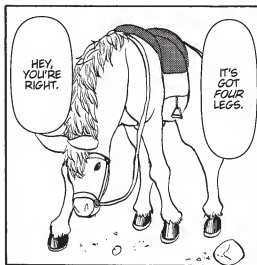
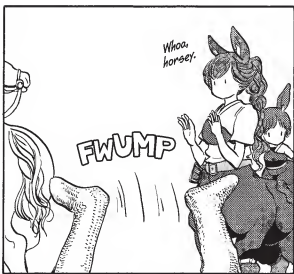
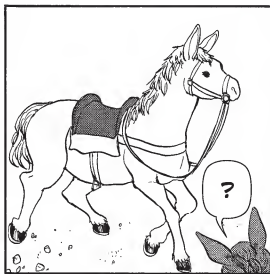


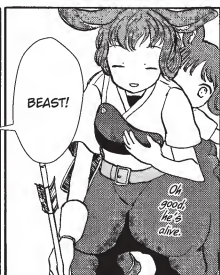


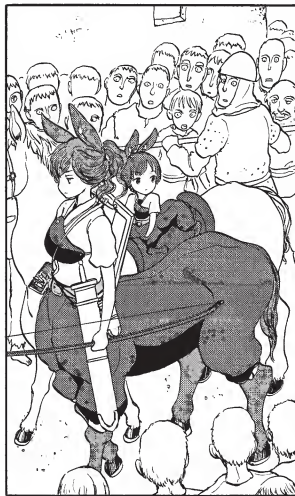
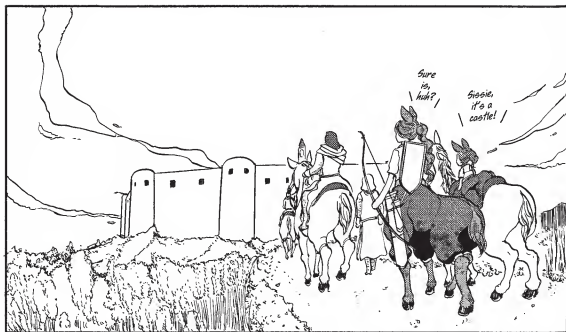


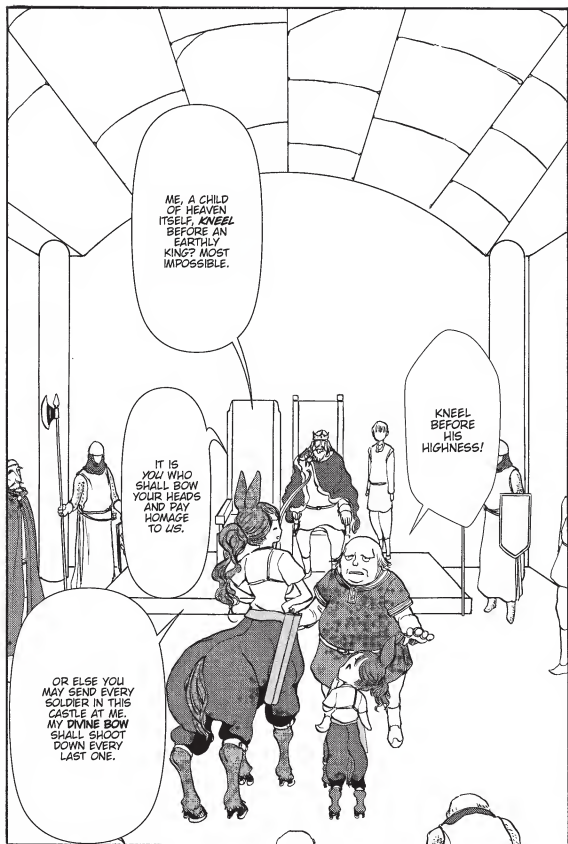


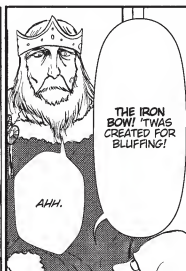
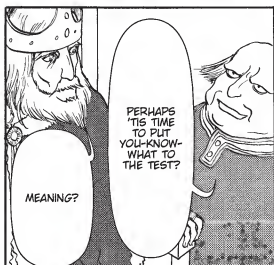


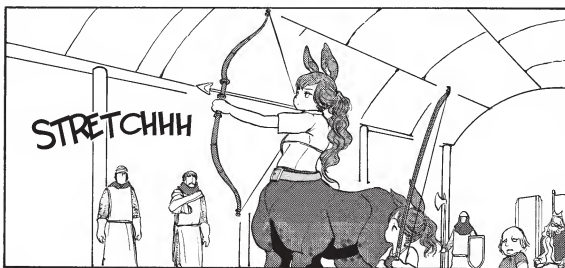
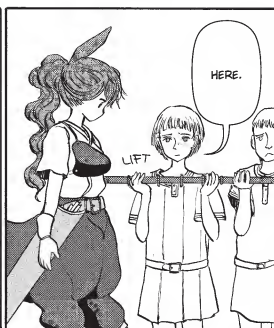
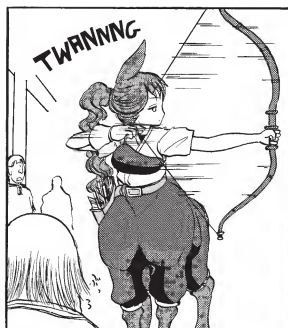


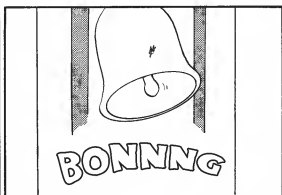
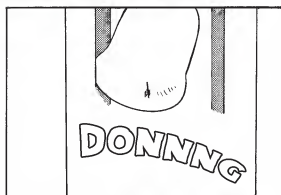
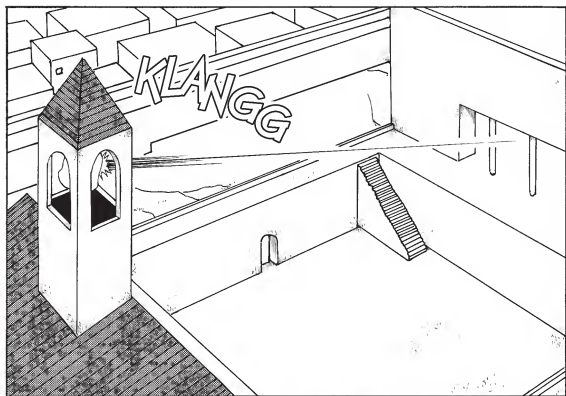


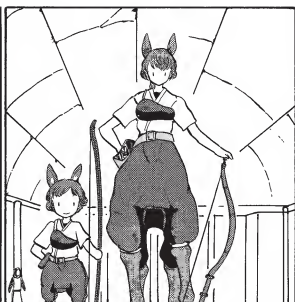
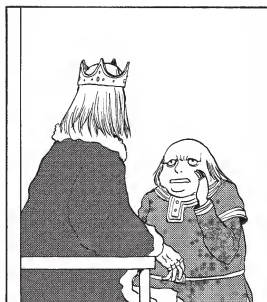




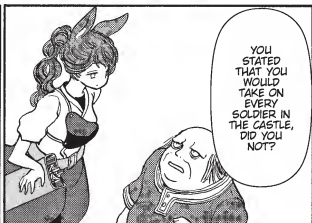




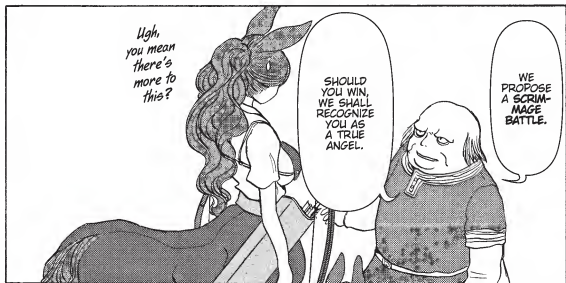




What
of it?



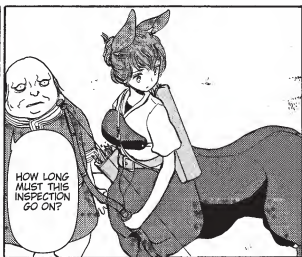
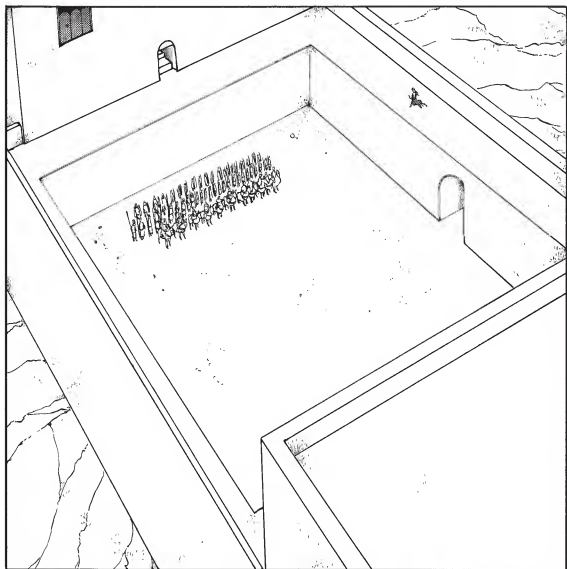
YOU
STATED
THAT YOU
WOULD
TAKE ON
EVERY
SOLDIER IN
THE CASTLE,
DID YOU
NOT?

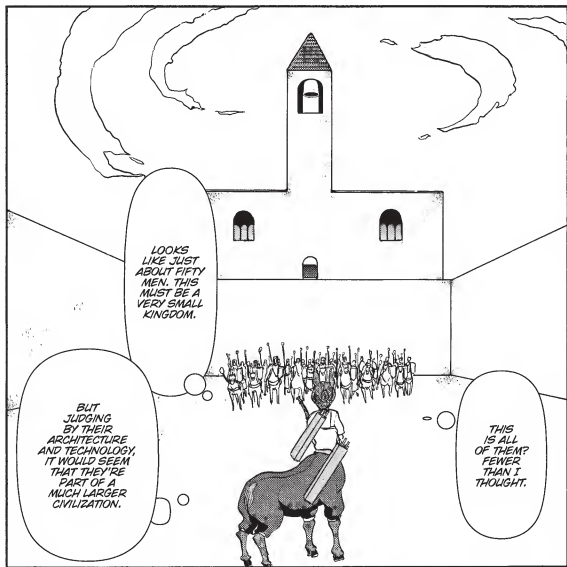
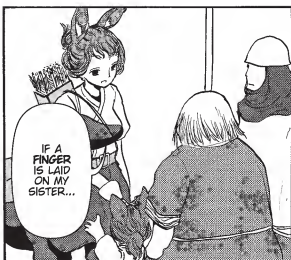


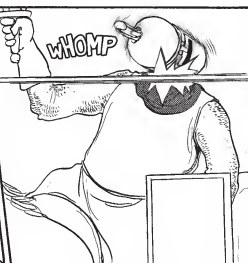
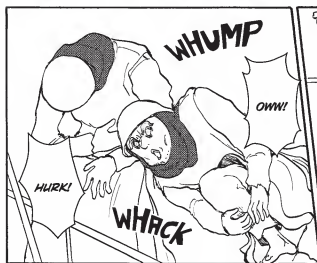
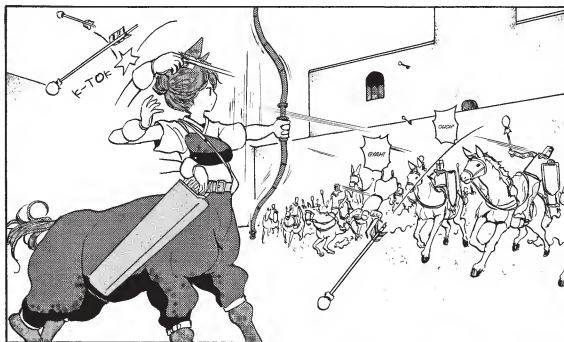
Ugh,
you mean
there's
more to
this?

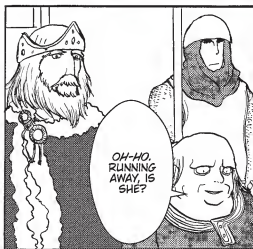
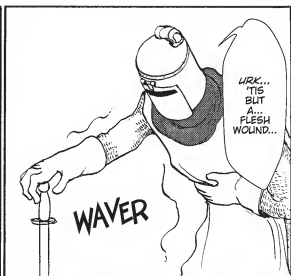
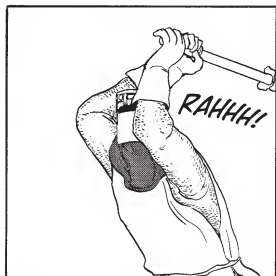
SHOULD
YOU WIN,
WE SHALL
RECOGNIZE
YOU AS
A TRUE
ANGEL.

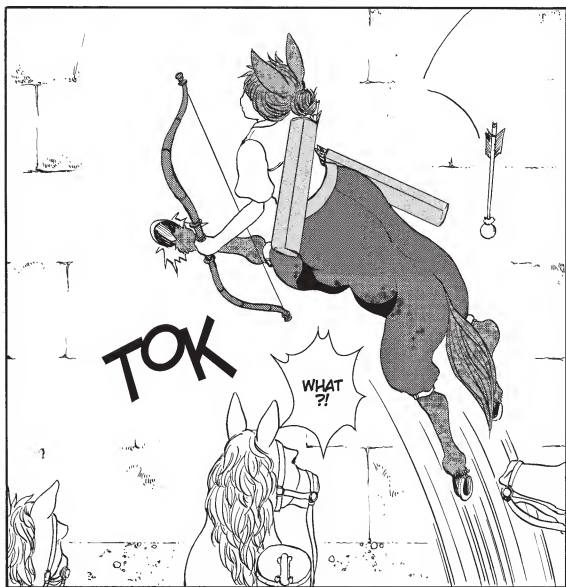
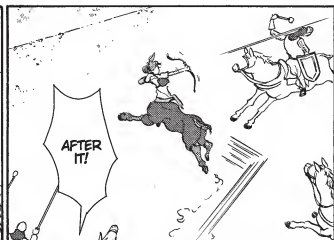
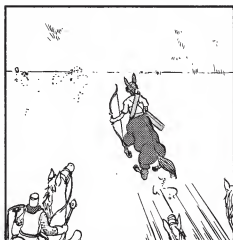
WE
PROPOSE
A SCRAM-
MAGE
BATTLE.

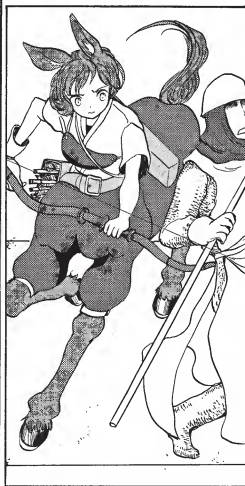
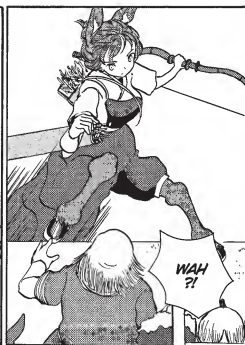
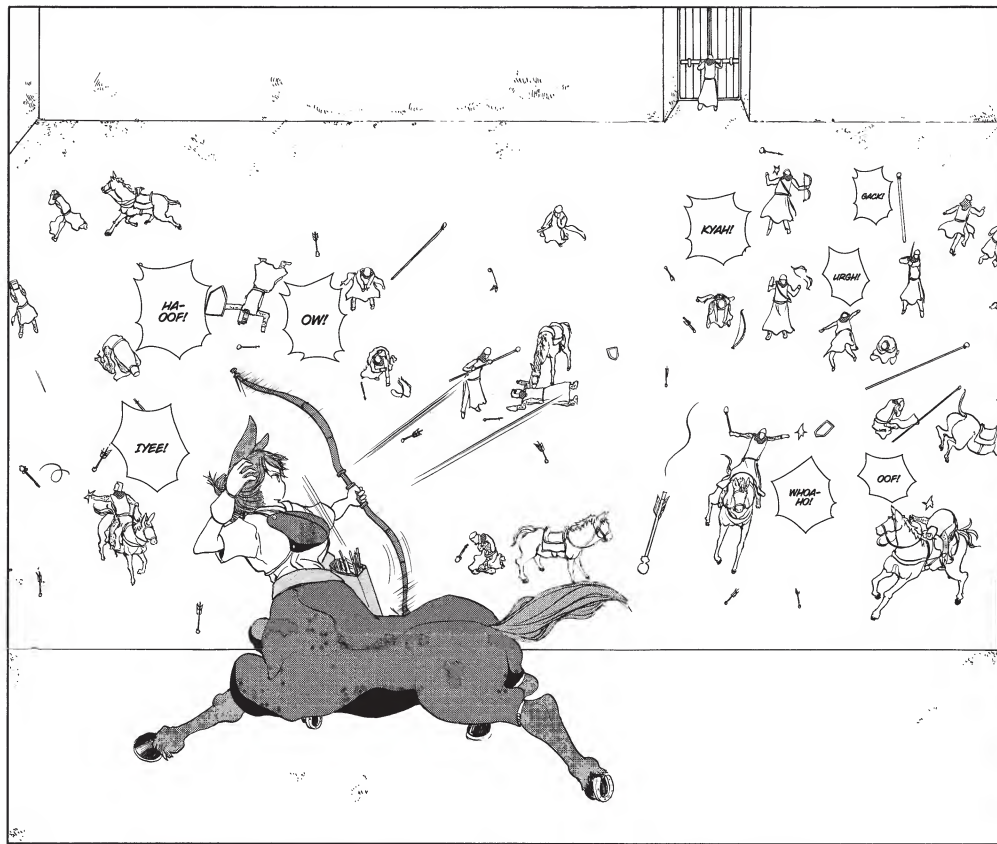


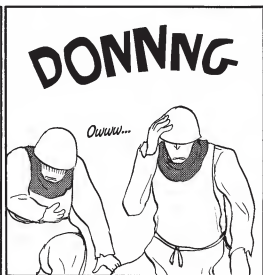
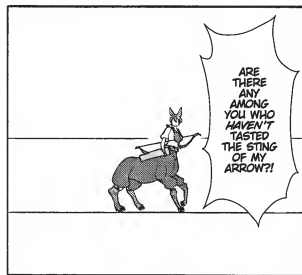
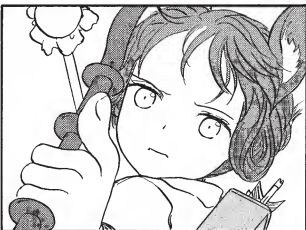
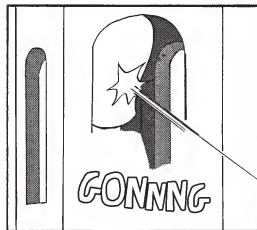
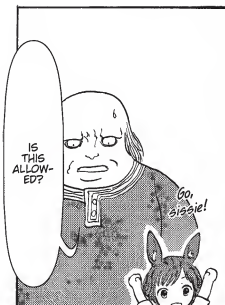


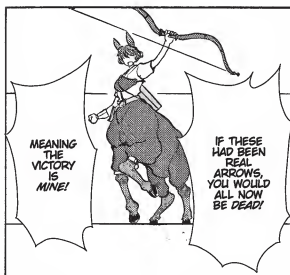
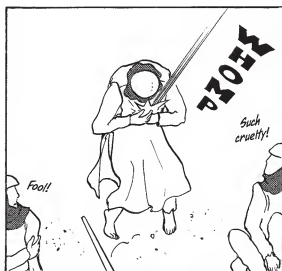


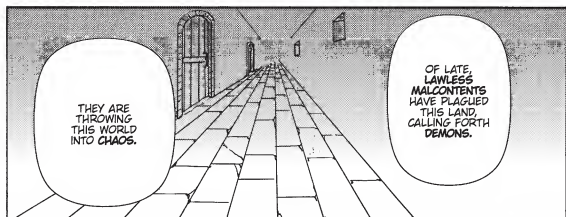
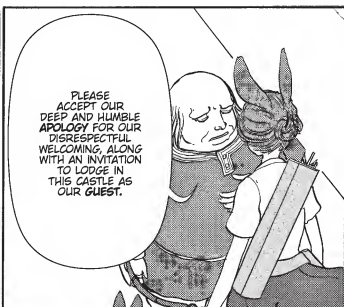
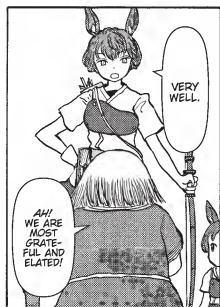














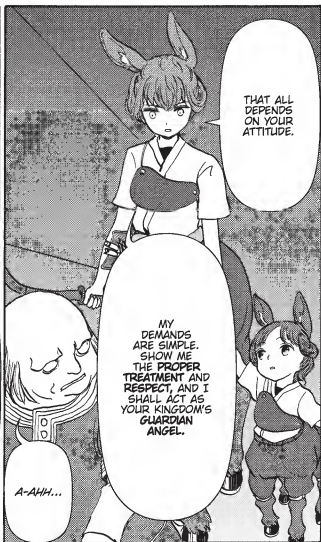
AND
SO YOU
SEE, WE
NATURALLY
THOUGHT
YOU ONE
OF THEM
AS WELL.

KINGS
ARE BEING
TURNED INTO
COMMONERS,
COMMONERS
INTO KINGS!
OH, IT'S UN-
SPEAKABLE!

THE
SORCERERS'
EMPIRE TO THE
NORTH HAS BEEN
CONQUERED BY
A WINGED DEMON
WHO BEARS THE
CHILD OF ANOTHER
RACE. ALL OF THE
NOBLES HAVE
BECOME HER
SLAVES.



I ASSUME
THAT THE
SORCERERS'
EMPIRE IS
HOME TO
SORCERERS?



THAT ALL
DEPENDS
ON YOUR
ATTITUDE.

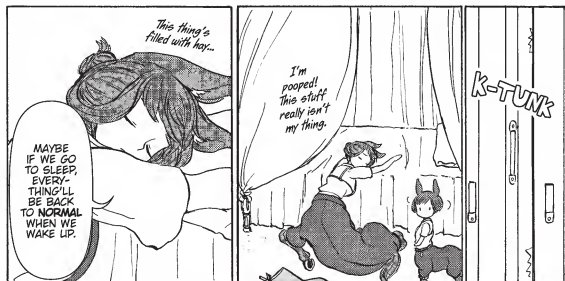
MY
DEMANDS
ARE SIMPLE.
SHOW ME
THE PROPER
TREATMENT AND
RESPECT, AND I
SHALL ACT AS
YOUR KINGDOM'S
GUARDIAN
ANGEL.

A-AHH...



THE
REST
ARE
NAUGHT
BUT
FOOLISH,
BARBAROUS,
SMELLY,
LAGABOUTS.

ALL
NOBLES
OF THAT
KINGDOM
USE
SORCERY...
OR,
RATHER,
ALL
SORCERERS
THERE ARE
NOBLES.



A CentaUr's Life

HEROES OF THE FANTASY WORLD: THE MASKED RUNNER

THIS TALE OF A CYBORG LOCKED IN BATTLE WITH A SECRET EVIL ORGANIZATION MADE USE OF A BEETLE MOTIF POPULAR WITH CHILDREN AND PORTRAYED BOTH PROTAGONIST AND ANTAGONIST AS MEMBERS OF THE FOUR-ARMED RACE. OF COURSE, THE FOUR-ARMED RACE HAD ALREADY GONE EXTINCT AND THE LOWER ARMS WERE FAKE PROPS, BUT THIS SUCCESSFULLY DEFUSED THE POTENTIAL FOR ALLEGATIONS OF RACIAL INEQUALITY (AND MADE FOR A MUCH EASIER PRODUCTION THAN MASKS, SINCE THE LOWER ARMS MERELY REQUIRED SOMETHING LONG AND SKINNY).

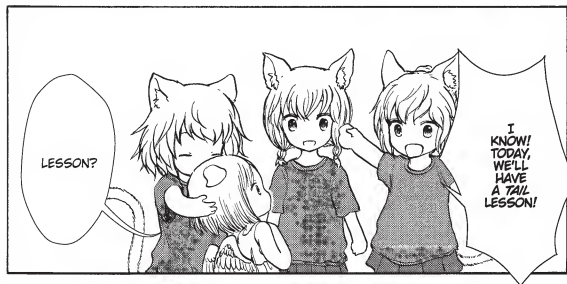
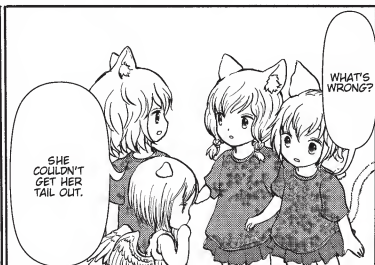
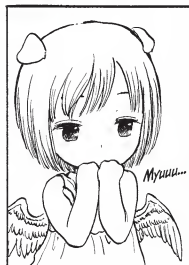
ON TOP OF THIS, THE SERIES' PROMOTION OF RUNNING AND EXERCISE ADDRESSED CONCERNS EXPRESSED BY THE MINISTRY OF EDUCATION OVER CHILDREN'S DECLINING FITNESS, EARNING IT A SPOT ON THEIR RECOMMENDED VIEWING LIST. THIS GREATLY AIDED THE SHOW IN AVOIDING FRICTION WITH GROUPS WHO VIEWED THE SPECIAL EFFECTS DRAMA, OR *TOKUSATSU*, GENRE AS TRASHY.

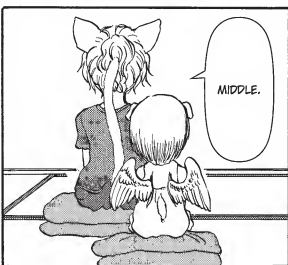
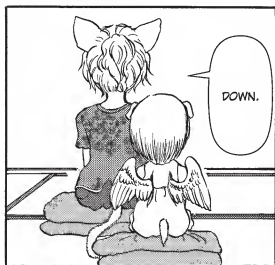
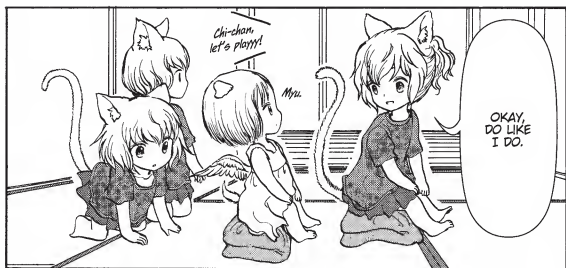
THE SERIES WAS VERY POPULAR, RESULTING IN A NUMBER OF SEQUEL SERIES.

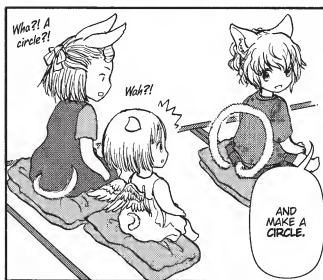
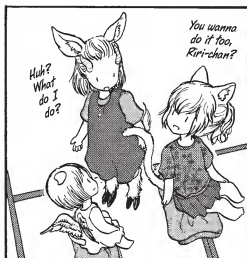
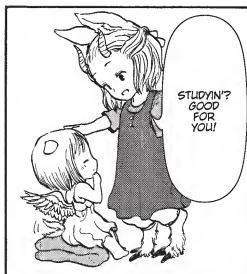


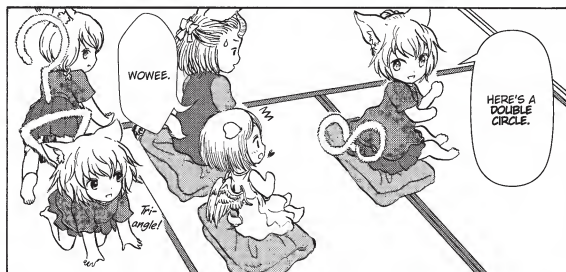
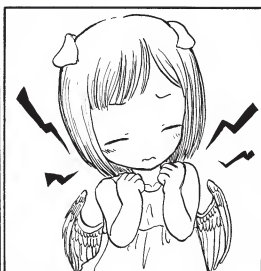
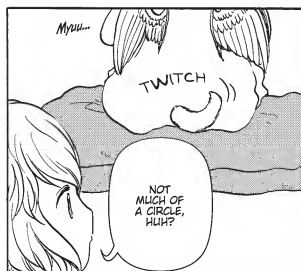
CHAPTER 57

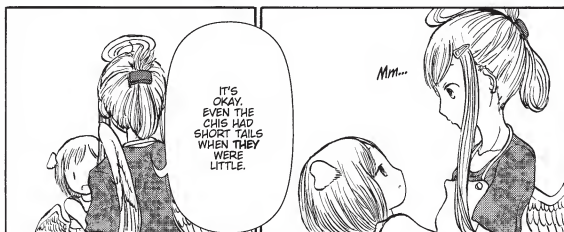
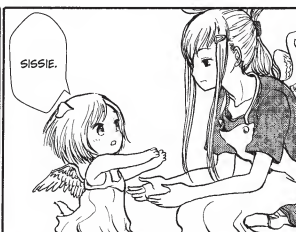
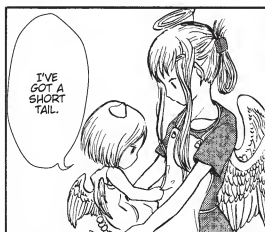
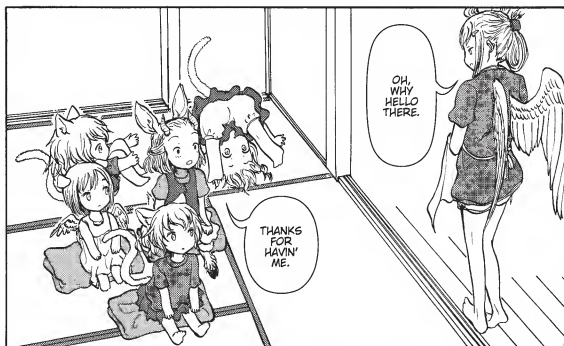


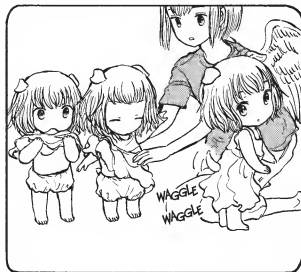
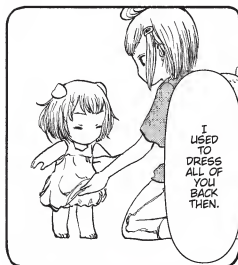
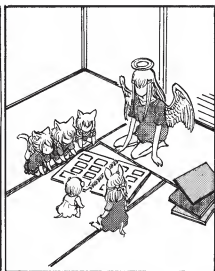
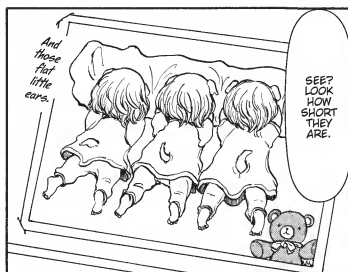




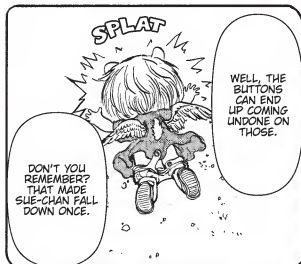
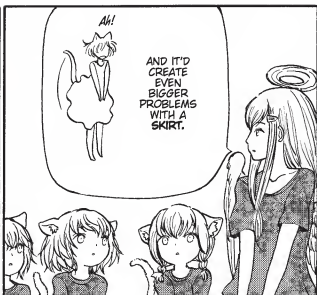


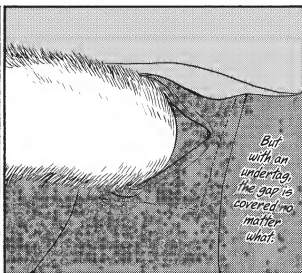
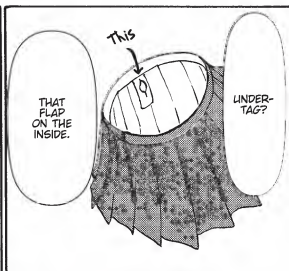


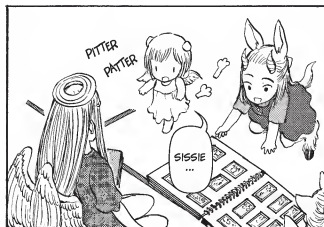










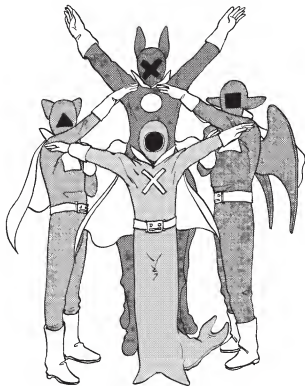


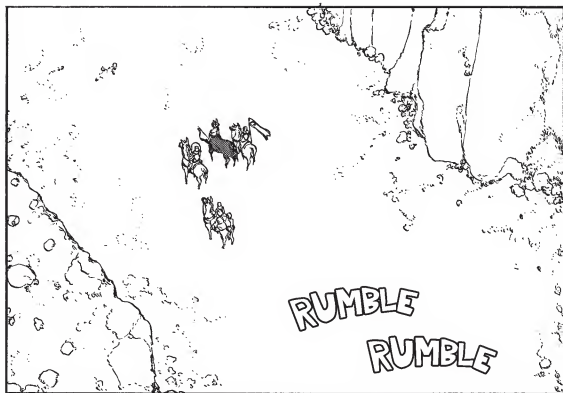
A CentaUr's Life

HEROES OF THE FANTASY WORLD: FOUR RANGERS

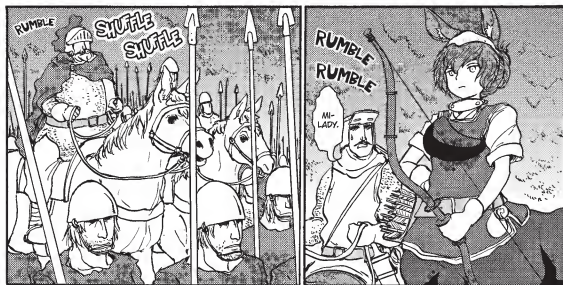
THIS WORK COULD ACCURATELY BE CREDITED AS THE GENESIS OF THE HERO SQUAD, OR *SENTAI*, GENRE. THE SERIES PIONEERED THE CONCEPT OF MULTIPLE PROTAGONISTS, EMPLOYING FOUR DIFFERENT HEROES REPRESENTING THE FOUR RACES CLASSIFIED AT THE TIME: AN ANGELFOLK/DRACONID, A CATFOLK/FALIN/GOATFOLK, A CENTAUR, AND A MERFOLK. MOREOVER, THIS TEAM HAD NO "LEADER", AND INSTEAD ALL DECISIONS WERE MADE VIA DEMOCRATIC CONSENSUS. THIS ELEMENT PAVED THE WAY TO A NEW TYPE OF DRAMA NEVER BEFORE SEEN IN A CHILDREN'S ACTION SERIES, AND GARNERED REMARKABLE SUPPORT FROM LEFT-WING ADULTS. AMONG THOSE LEFTISTS, HOWEVER, ONLY THE INDUSTRIAL COMMUNALIST PARTY (HEREAFTER REFERRED TO AS THE COMMUNALIST PARTY) HEAVILY CRITICIZED THE SERIES' FREQUENT EMPHASIS OF DEMOCRATIC CONSENSUS, INSTEAD CONTINUALLY PREACHING THE SUPERIORITY OF THE PARTY'S OWN STANCE OF DEMOCRATIC CENTRALISM.

ULTIMATELY, THE SERIES WAS A SUCCESS, LEADING TO THE CREATION OF FUTURE *SENTAI* SERIES.



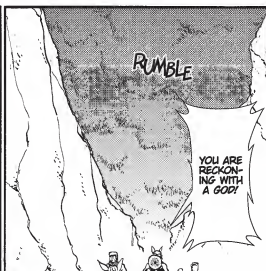
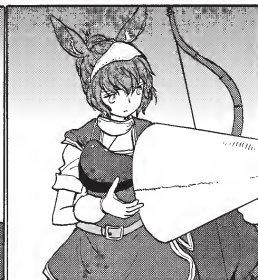
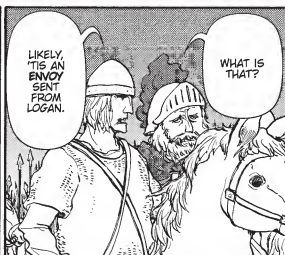
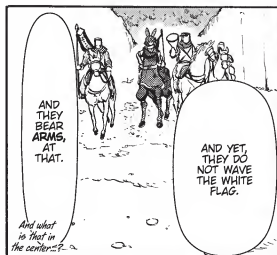


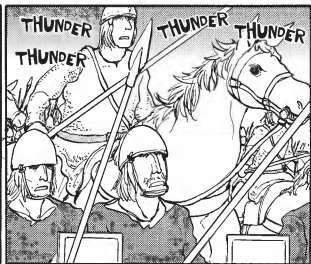
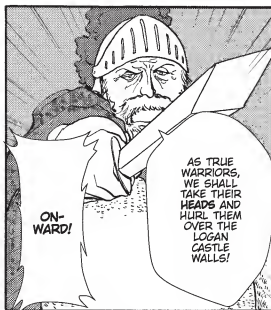
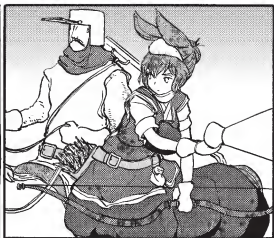
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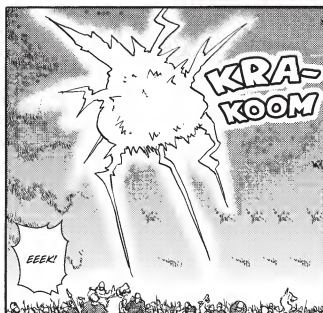
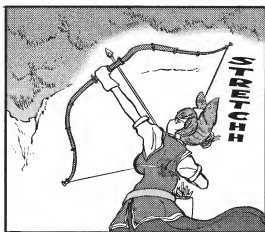


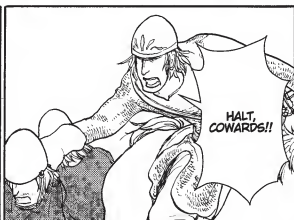
TRAMP
TRAMP

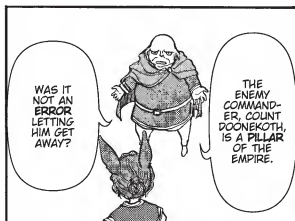
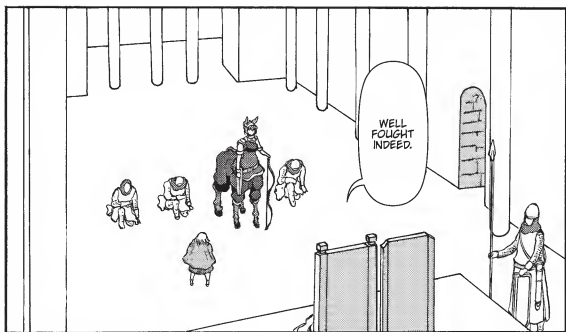


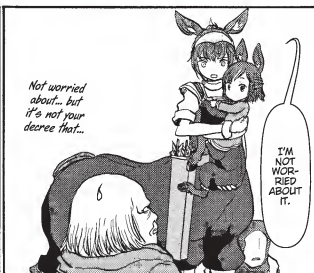
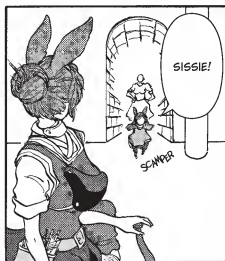


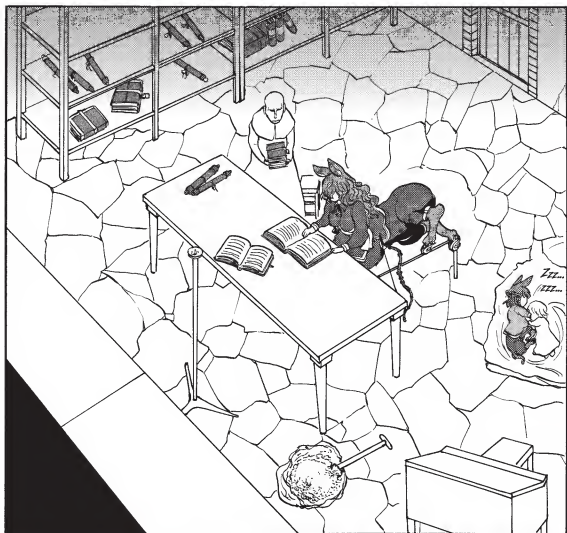


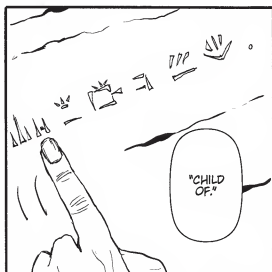
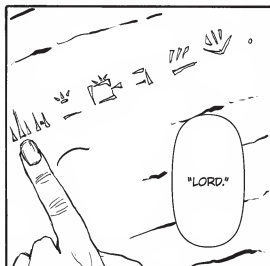
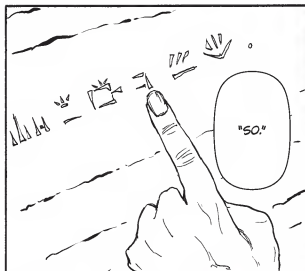


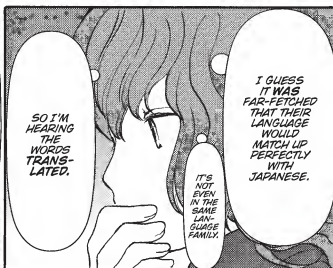


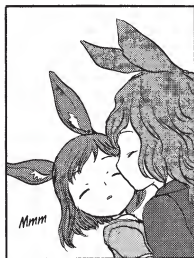
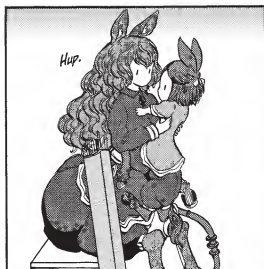


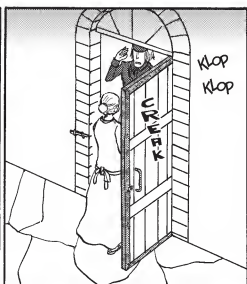
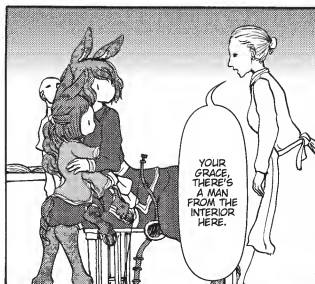


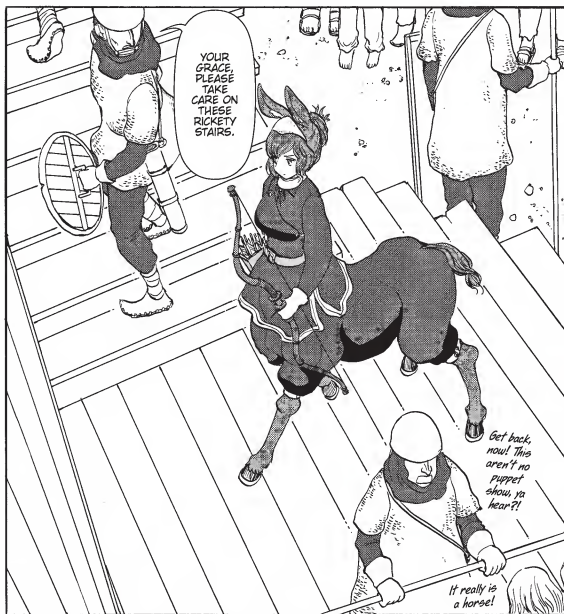
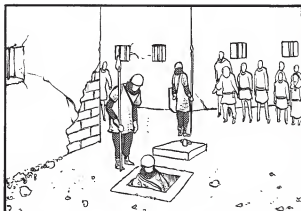


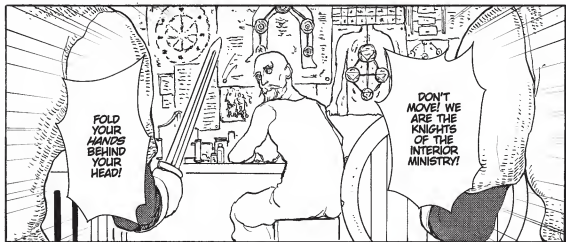
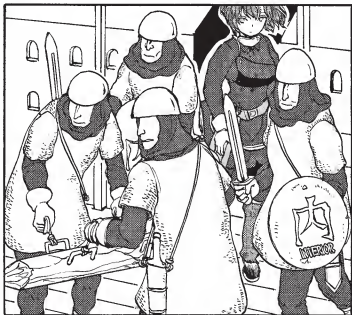




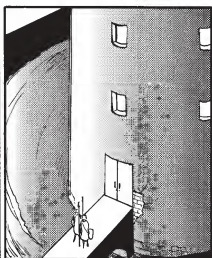
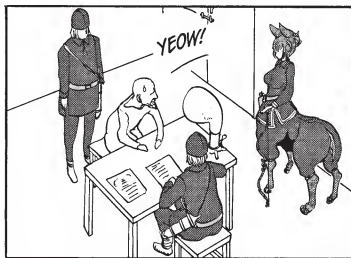
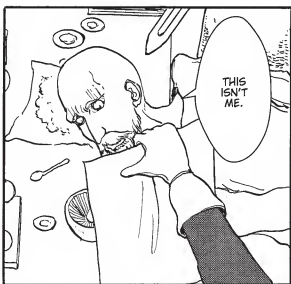


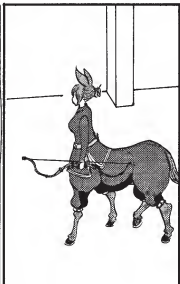
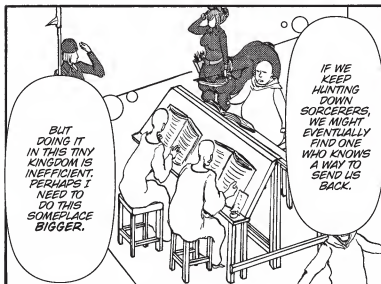
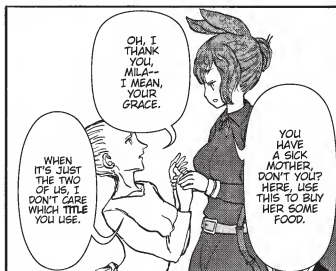
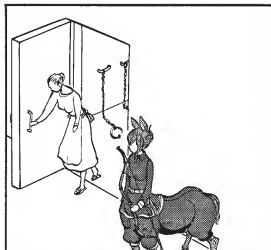










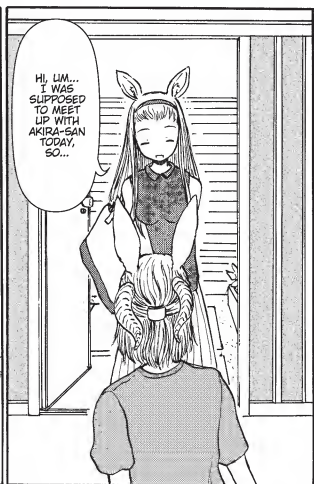
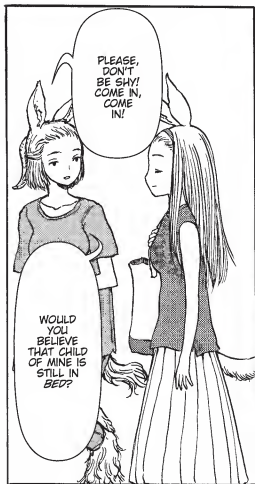
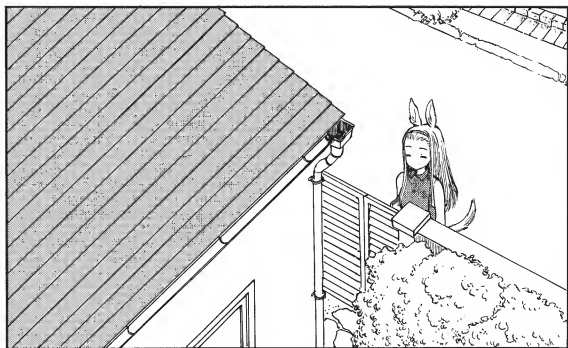


A CentaUr's Life

HEROES OF THE FANTASY WORLD: MITHRA HUMAN

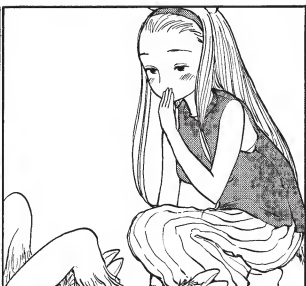
CARRYING ON THE LEGACY OF GIANT MONSTER, OR KAIJU TOKUSATSU, FILMS, MITHRA HUMAN TELLS THE ACTION SCI-FI TALE OF A GIANT HERO ENGAGED IN BATTLE WITH LIKEWISE GIANT MONSTERS AND SPACE CREATURES. IT BECKONED PRAISE FOR ITS USE OF INTRICATE MINIATURES IN EVERY EPISODE AND SUPERIOR MONSTER AND ALIEN DESIGNS. THE SCULPTING OF THE HERO, BASED ON AN AMIDA BUDDHA MOTIF, COMBINED TRAITS OF MULTIPLE RACES, AS IS OFTEN SEEN IN HOLY IMAGERY. THE ORIGINAL WORK WAS A SUCCESS, LEADING TO PERIODIC SUBSEQUENT SERIES, ALL THE WAY UP TO THE PRESENT DAY.



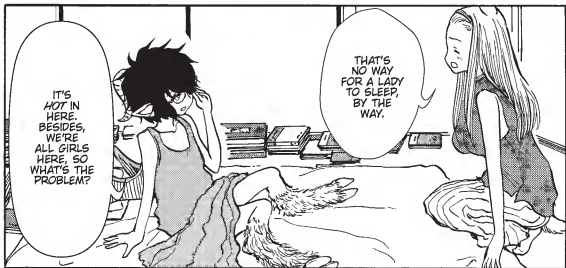
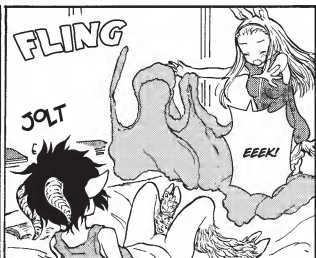




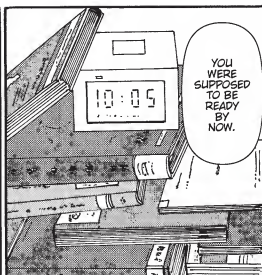
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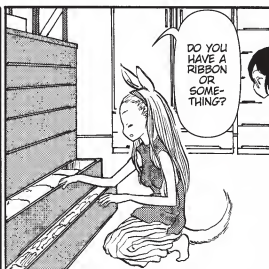
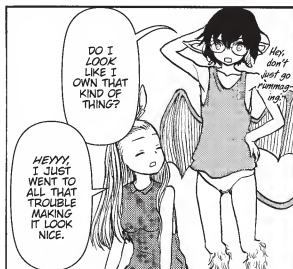


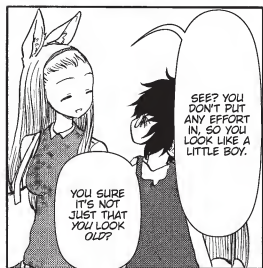
AKIRA-
CHAN,
IT'S
ALREADY
TEN.



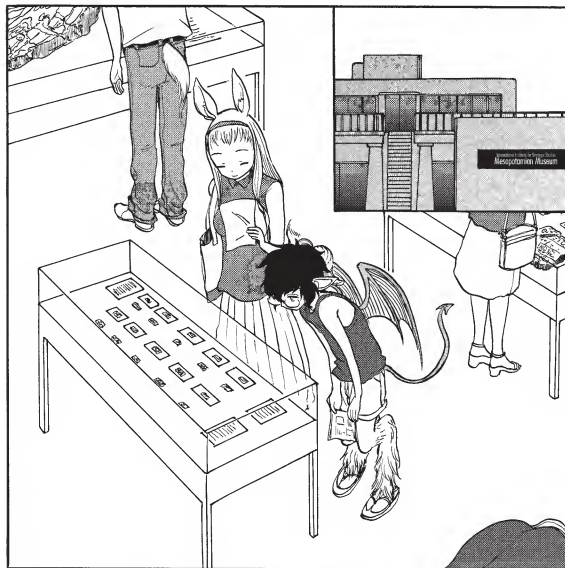
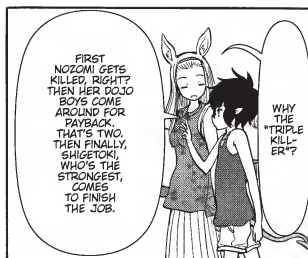
THAT'S
NO WAY
FOR A LADY
TO SLEEP,
BY THE
WAY.

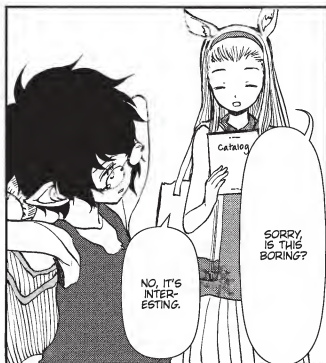
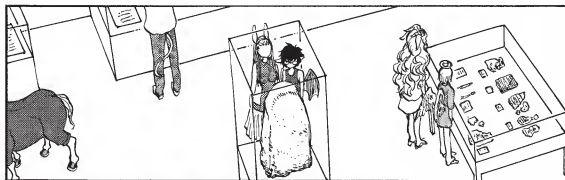


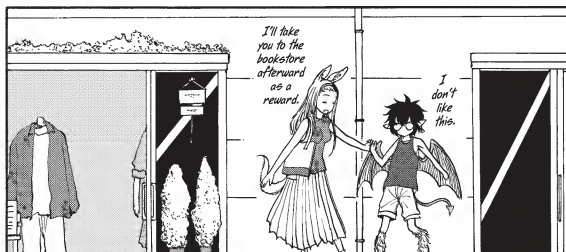


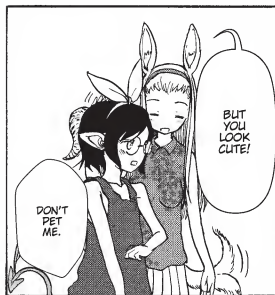


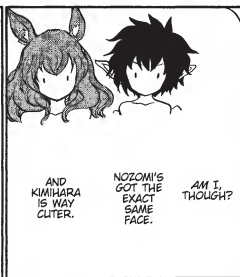
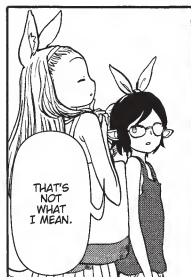
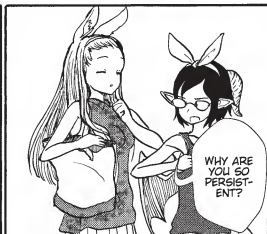
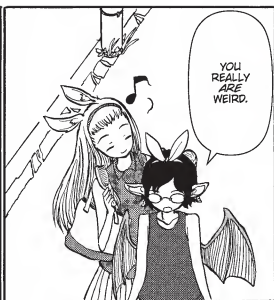


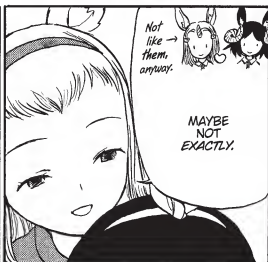
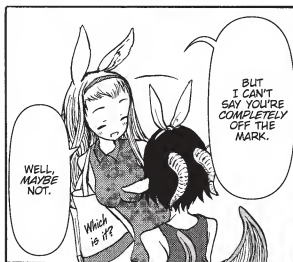
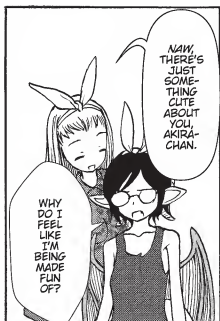


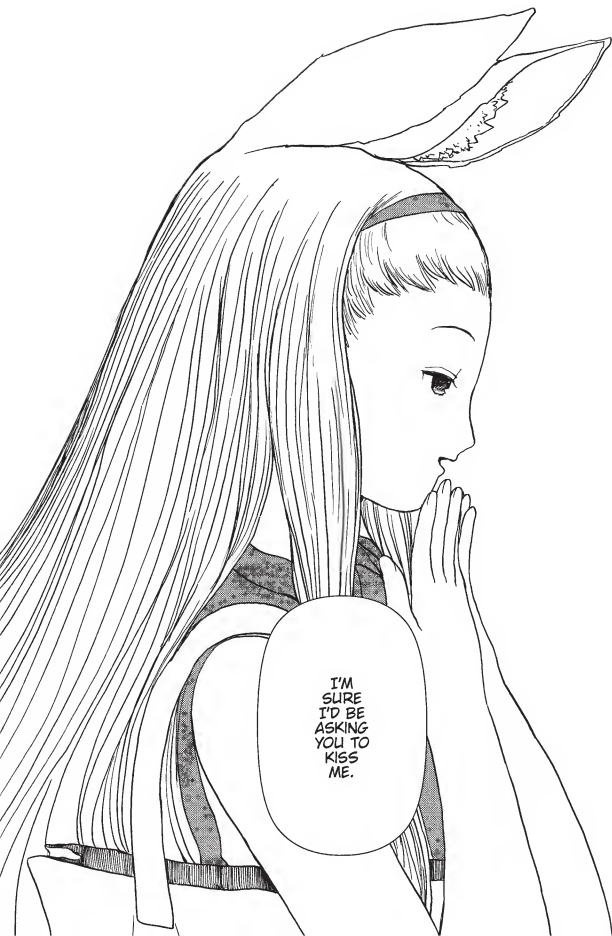








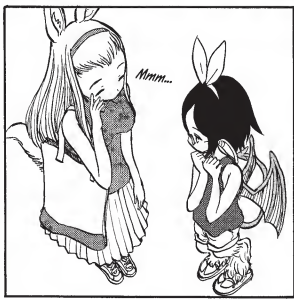
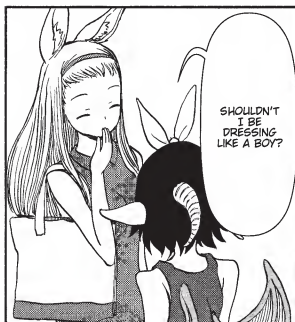
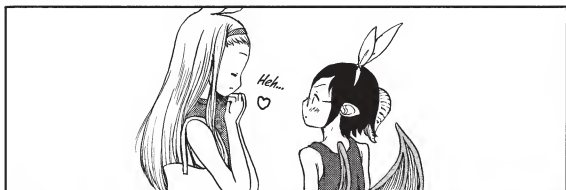




I'M
SURE
I'D BE
ASKING
YOU TO
KISS
ME.



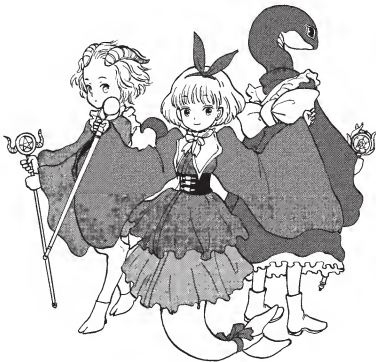
IF
ONLY
YOU
WERE
A BOY,
AKIRA-
CHAN.



A CentaUr's Life

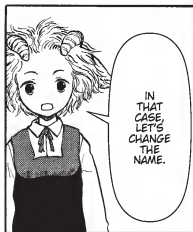
HEROES OF THE FANTASY WORLD: MAGICAL GIRL SERIES

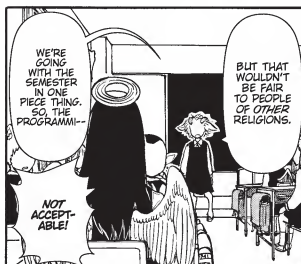
IT WASN'T JUST THE GENDER OF THE TARGET AUDIENCE OR THE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN ANIME AND *TOKUSATSU* THAT DISTINGUISHED MAGICAL GIRL SERIES FROM ACTION HERO DRAMAS. ACTION HERO DRAMAS TYPICALLY DEPICTED OVERPOWERED PROTAGONISTS--WHO OFTEN WEREN'T EVEN HUMAN--DOING BATTLE WITH LIKEWISE OVERPOWERED AND EXTRAORDINARY ANTAGONISTS. BUT IF YOU WERE TO REMOVE THE MAGIC FROM MAGICAL GIRL SERIES, YOU'D FIND THAT THEY LARGELY DEALT WITH MORE-OR-LESS DOWN-TO-EARTH GIRLS SOLVING REAL LIFE, EVERYDAY PROBLEMS, ALBEIT SYMBOLIZED IN THE FORM OF SUPERNATURAL ANTAGONISTS. THIS, OF COURSE, MEANT THAT THE GIRLS IN QUESTION HAD TO BE PORTRAYED AS TRUE-TO-LIFE RACES. IN ORDER TO BALANCE THIS TASK WITH THE NEED FOR RACIAL EQUALITY, THE STUDIO STRATEGIZED TO HAVE THE RACE OF THE PROTAGONIST CHANGE WITH EACH NEW SERIES. EVEN IF THE *PLUG* WERE PULLED DUE TO LACK OF POPULARITY, THEY COULD DEFLECT ANY CRITICISM OF RACIAL DISCRIMINATION BY STRESSING THEIR INTENDED PLANS. LUCKILY, MAGICAL GIRL SERIES PROVED POPULAR, SPAWNING A NUMBER OF SEQUEL SERIES.

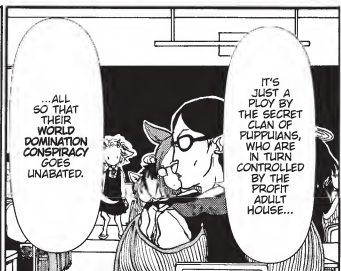
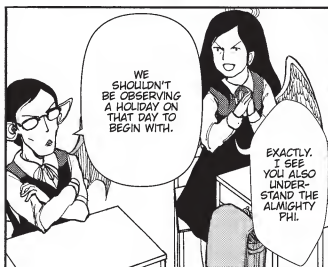




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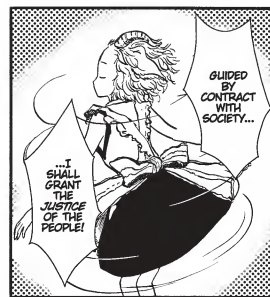
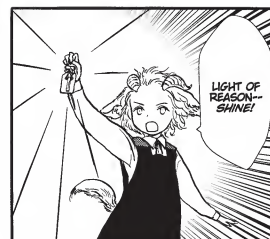


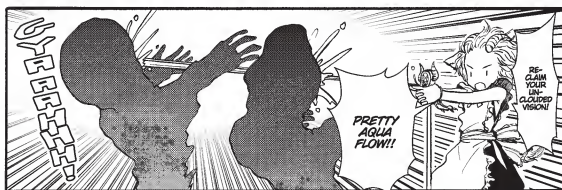
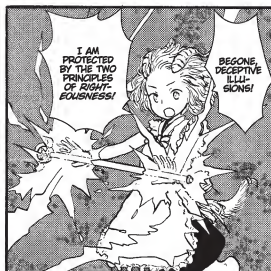




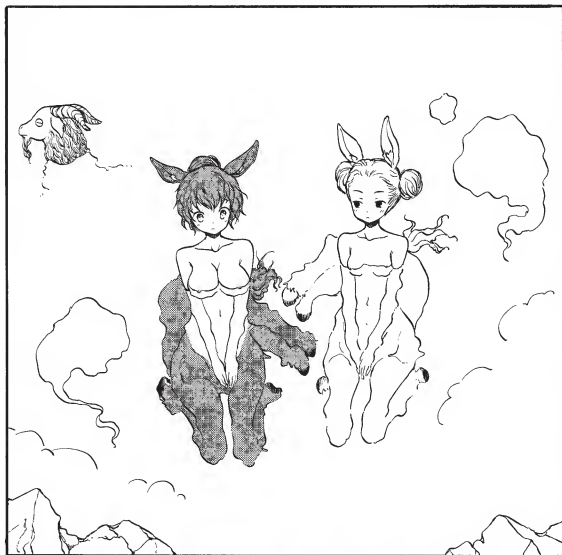


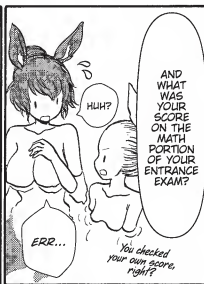
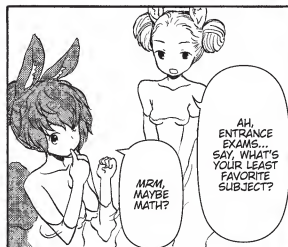
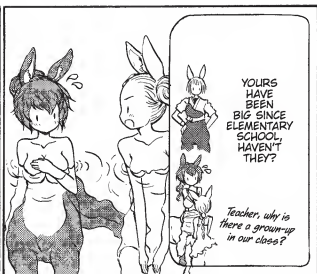






A CentaUr's Life







THE DIVISION OF KANATA LAND AND WARRIORS' RETURN TO FARMING

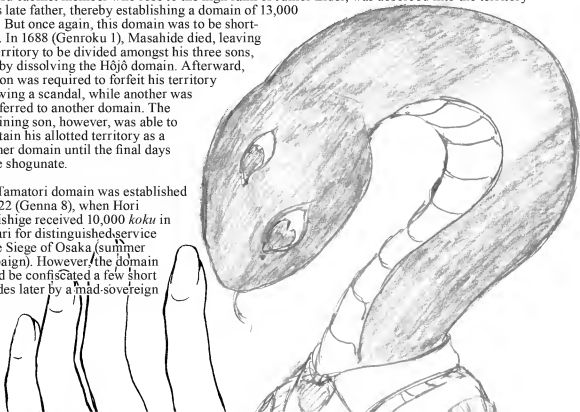
At the close of the *Sengoku* period, control of the old fiefdom of Hidachi shifted from the Oda clan into the hands of the Satake clan, only for the Satake to be relocated to Ideba following the Battle of Sekigahara. The remaining land of Kanata was divided up into a number of small splinters, including Bakufu domains, retainer domains, religious domains, and various other satellite domains. Furthermore, the division of those domains was subject to rapid and frequent change throughout the course of the Edo period, and the land had little political stability during this time.

One such small domain located in south Kanata, known as Yatabe, was bestowed to Hosokawa Okimoto. Combined with Okimoto's existing domain in Motegi, he was able to establish a domain of 10,000 *koku*. Okimoto was the younger brother of Hosokawa Tadaoki, founding father of the Higo domain in Kyushu. The Yatabe domain would prove to be the sole bastion of stability in the region, and would later be the birthplace of inventor Iizuka Igashichi. He would become well known for a number of farming tool and timepiece creations, the first of which was an automatic grain separator, as well as for using precise measurement methods to create highly accurate maps, making him a predecessor to Inou Tadataka.

The Hôjô daimyô domain was established at two separate times. The first time was in 1610 (Keichô 15), when Sakuma Katsuyuki was granted the 3,000-*koku* Hôjô territory located in northern Kanata. When combined with territories in Shinano-no-kuni and Oumi-no-kuni, the controlled territory amounted to a total 10,000-*koku*, thus establishing the daimyô domain. Katsuyuki once served as a general under Oda Nobunaga, eventually marrying into the family of Sassa Narimasa. Following the demise of Narimasa, he served under the Hôjô clan, after whose demise he served under Gamô Ujisato, and then Hideyoshi. He served in the eastern army during the Battle of Sekigahara, thereby at last becoming a daimyô. However, his domain lasted only five short years. In 1615 (Keichô 20), Katsuyuki distinguished himself in battle at the Siege of Osaka (summer campaign) and was absorbed into Naganuma, then establishing the 18,000-*koku* Shinano-no-Kuni Naganuma domain and abandoning the Hôjô domain.

The second establishment of the Hôjô domain came in 1682 (Tenna 2), when Hotta Masahide, a Bakufu cabinet member who rose to the high rank of Junior Elder, was absorbed into the territory of his late father, thereby establishing a domain of 13,000 *koku*. But once again, this domain was to be short-lived. In 1688 (Genroku 1), Masahide died, leaving his territory to be divided amongst his three sons, thereby dissolving the Hôjô domain. Afterward, one son was required to forfeit his territory following a scandal, while another was transferred to another domain. The remaining son, however, was able to maintain his allotted territory as a retainer domain until the final days of the shogunate.

The Tamatori domain was established in 1622 (Genna 8), when Hori Toshishige received 10,000 *koku* in Niihari for distinguished service in the Siege of Osaka (summer campaign). However, the domain would be confiscated a few short decades later by a mad-sovereign ruler.



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Only the 2,000-*koku* retainer domain left to Toshihige's second son, Toshinao--which would become the modern-day Kurihara district of Kanata City--was passed down.

The area that composed what is now the Sakura district fell under the umbrella of the neighboring Tsuchiura daimyō domain during the course of the Edo period.

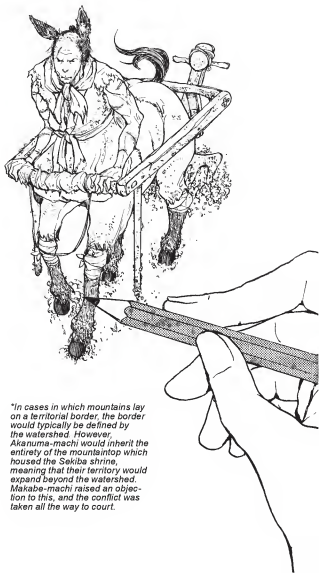
Likewise, the regions composing modern-day Mizumori, Kamisugama, and Nakasugama would fall under the umbrella of the neighboring Kobari domain, while the former Akanuma-machi (modern-day Kanata City, Akanuma district) would become the territory of a branch family within the Makabe domain. Many other daimyō domains such as that of Kasama and Ishioka were also situated in regions of what would become modern-day Kanata City.

There were also many detached territories held remotely by scattered daimyō domains. The Mutsuno-kuni Sendai, Oumi-no-Kuni Takatō, and Kouzuke-no-Kuni Maebashi domains all held territory in Kanata. In addition to these were many retainer domains smaller than 10,000 *koku*. Along with the aforementioned Hori and Hotta families, the Yura clan--descendants of Nitta Yoshisada--held an encampment in what is now Ushiku City.

The summit of Mount Sekiba became a spiritual grounds, housing temples and shrines. The twin peaks of Mount Sekiba had already long been hailed as two mighty deities, but in the year 782 (Enryaku 1), the temple known as Chuuzenji was erected by the monk Tokuitsu, and it became a syncretization of Shinto and Buddhism.

Chuuzenji would later be abandoned as a result of an edict mandating the separation of Shinto and Buddhism, but this coincided with the founding of the Mount Sekiba shrine which still exists today. This use of the mountain's summit as a temple ground would later lead to a territorial conflict between Makabe-machi (modern-day Makabe City, Makabe District) and Akanuma-machi*.

And so it was that small regions were divided up, many of them no longer even centrally tied to Kanata. Kanata, which was also far from any main roadways, had become a mere grassland. Gone was any trace of the burgeoning political waypoint Kanata had been in the Heian and medieval days. The Merfolk who had once served as aquatic transportation across the Katori inland sea vanished from the region. As the Sengoku era drew to a close and retainers found themselves lordless (the lords having either perished or gone afar), a considerable number of soldiers chose to revert to simple farming lives. The Arai clan, who had once served under Oda, reverted to a farming lifestyle right at their own castle (Onozaki Fortress). For the many warriors of the centaur race, however, the road ahead would be difficult. The physical structure of their feet made work in the rice paddies impossible. In the beginning, they led arduous lives performing the relatively low-producing field farming of wheat and other crops. But as the aftershocks of centuries of violence gradually subsided, society as a whole saw an uptick in productivity and circulation, giving way to the proliferation of commercial crops. The centaurs' restriction to field farming would take things in an unexpected direction.



"In cases in which mountains lay on a territorial border, the border would typically be defined by the watershed. However, Akanuma-machi would inherit the entirety of the mountaintop which housed the Sekiba shrine, meaning that their territory would expand beyond the watershed. Makabe-machi raised an objection to this, and the conflict was taken all the way to court."

SEVEN SEAS ENTERTAINMENT PRESENTS

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story and art by KEI MURAYAMA

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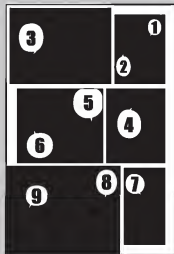
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This book reads from *right to left*, Japanese style. If this is your first time reading manga, you start reading from the top right panel on each page and take it from there. If you get lost, just follow the numbered diagram here. It may seem backwards at first, but you'll get the hang of it! Have fun!!



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HIME'S DIVINE ARROW



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